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**EDITH LESLIE.**

**VOL. I.**

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**EDITH LESLIE.**

**A NOVEL.**

**IN THREE VOLUMES.**

**VOL. I.**

**LONDON:**  
**T. C. NEWBY, PUBLISHER,**  
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**1844.**



T. G. NEWBY, PRINTER, MORTIMER STREET.

# EDITH LESLIE.

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## CHAPTER I.

Sweet stream! that winds through yonder glade,  
Apt emblem of a virtuous maid ;  
Silent and chaste, she steals along,  
Far from the world's gay busy throng ;  
With steady yet prevalling force,  
Intent upon her destined course ;  
Graceful, and useful, all she does,  
Blessing, and blest, where'er she goes ;  
Pure-bosom'd as that wat'ry glass,  
And heaven reflected in her face !

COWPER.

When the sun sheds abroad his earliest glory,  
and the whole portraiture of the world seems to  
rise in perspective, clear, fair, and pure, how  
exhilarating it is, while you inhale an atmosphere

rife with health, to mount your noble horse, who looks all crest, and steps as if shod with air, inflating his nostrils, and impatient for nature's first-born sport! At length the hounds touch the scent—they are in full cry—the huntsman presses on—steed rivals steed in their rapid course—they grasp the distant barrier, and disappear in the horizon.

Such a scene has just taken place—a few moments have passed—all sound is hushed, down the wind, and the heather on Lodon common seems as if no foot had ever pressed it.

Tranquil and calm as it then was, Edith Leslie and her sole attendant, a singularly large and beautiful blood-hound, took their usual walk across the moor. All joy and harmony within, Edith shook back her golden ringlets, presenting to the brilliant morning features most like itself. She caressed the faithful animal beside her, and sung by snatches to vales, hills, and sky. Thus they wend their way for some distance, when *Meteor* broke the spell, by uttering a dismal



whine, and started off bearing his nose to the earth, and increasing his speed at every bound. The timid girl trembled with the knowledge that there must be some evil near, and wondered that the dog forsook, instead of guarding her, as he was wont. While thought dissatisfied combated thought of what it might be, her favourite returned true to his mistress; but when she stooped to chide him, there was something of so much meaning in those intelligent brown eyes, that she hesitated—again at fault—and fancying she knew his object, turned quickly towards home. But Meteor would not move, and yielding to the opposite direction, she watched his countenance, when, barking with the most significant exhibitions of canine gratitude, he trotted on before her, and at intervals casting round a look of encouragement, digressed a little from the path, leading the astonished Edith over the unruffled furze, where you might tell the dew as it lay. Anxiety was fast dispiriting her, which the

sensible animal perceiving, showed by voice, ears, and tail that a last effort must be made.

They were ascending an eminence from whence were views over all the country; there she knew the mystery would cease. She determined not to be urged further than this point, and with such a resolution she reached the summit, and looking in the direction Meteor indicated, discovered a figure dressed in hunting costume, stretched upon the ground. This was evidently the object of Meteor's disquietude, for running forward he sat peacefully down, intimating, as well as dog could, that here terminated his generous part.

Edith lost and gained back all her nerve in that moment; she approached in the hope of being of some assistance to a fellow creature, and kneeling, raised his head on her arm, which was soon bathed with blood. In less time than thought, she had discovered the wound, which was of small compass, though deep, and with her handkerchief bound it up. While the urgency

of the case was thus great, the young girl felt not more than the duty she was called to perform; but when the pale face before her looked more shadowy and death-like, by the contrast of those raven locks that wreathed mournfully and ominously on his brow—the scarlet livery he wore, mocking the life-blood which dyed her hands—she shuddered, and became nearly as helpless as the object of her solicitude. The contemplation of her situation then indeed was painful—alone, on a desolate and far extending heath, with a corpse lying so near her heart, that a chill, spite of youth and health, stole over it. Earnestly praying that the stranger might recover, yet fearing to expect too much, she was almost startled to annihilation by the deep tones of his voice asking for water, and again and again she listened, and assured him there was none near; but the tears of her thankfulness falling fast, seemed to have the desired effect; and he opened his eyes, first in vacancy, then, as light came to them, in dreaming wonder on the vision above;

which Edith no sooner became aware of, than blushing through the mist, turned gently away, sweeping with her beautiful tresses the moisture from his face, by this gesture reproving the length of his gaze, though unwittingly clearing the prospect. And who could have resisted such enchantment? The Phidian lips that breathed a fragrant smile, or the deep blue eye in which her soul appeared to weep, alike subdued the coldest natures, and overwhelmed warmer ones. Only the softest, sweetest sentiments that ever rose in human breast were echoed there. But when her charge thanked her with more than the energy and eloquence she believed possible to proceed from such bloodless features, Edith began to retire into all her woman's bashfulness as the reality of having been of vital assistance to a young and very handsome man dawned upon her.

Silence was therefore her timid refuge, not knowing with what words to receive his acknowledgments; and freed from the necessity of any

longer supporting him, she rose to her graceful height, every charm increased by the circumstances in which she was placed, imbuing her patient with a veneration he had never known till then; so, when nearest in thought, becoming mutually more distant, as the character of each wrought upon the other. Meteor, conscious of his mistress's precedence, waited till the stranger had ceased speaking; then placed his intelligent head between the hands of him whom he had succoured, in dumb accents claiming a reward. This relieved both parties, and the young man greeting him warmly, asked, "is the noble beast yours, madam?"

"Yes," returned Edith, approaching and affectionately caressing the dog, "and to his sagacity, I believe, you are indebted for the slight service I have rendered. He led me to this place; being an old favourite of my father's, and remarkable for talent and fidelity, it becomes quite filial in me to heed the dear fellow."

"And," exclaimed the youth, "places me under an eternal obligation to his lovely ward."

At this moment, to the inconceivable delight of Edith, who was becoming much embarrassed, a horseman was seen at no great distance, galloping towards the spot; and the young man recognising a friend, Edith, expressing a wish that he should soon be perfectly restored, and bowing to his reiterated expressions of gratitude, without raising her eyes to the miracle of animation she had excited, flitted lightly over the heather, and was soon lost to his admiring gaze, attended by Meteor.

"In name," thought the stanger, "fit emblem of such a dream!"

Scarcely discomposing the delicate harebell, or interrupting the wild music of the birds that fluttered on a few thorny tufts, Edith took her harmless way, the pulse of youth beating in her veins, loving and beloved by all around. She was approaching the scene of her many charities—a peaceful hamlet, which, redeemed from the

broad and harsh waste, lay serenely basking on a verdant slope ; Nature's thousand graces crowded round the spot, breathing praises to their great Creator. The cottage whither Edith bent her steps was situated apart from the rest, looking the superior brilliant of the diadem ; the myrtle clung more fondly to its side, and choice flowers girdled the little plot.

"The morning sun shines as gaily on the cottage casement as on the stately window of the palace, good Nelly," was the fair girl's salutation, when, almost breathless, she stood within the porch of her nurse's dwelling. "And blessed be the goodness of providence, that these dim eyes are spared to see it, and my sweet young lady," said the old woman, taking off her glasses to look at her darling. There she sat, an effigy of by-gone days, her hair plaited very smooth, and vying in whiteness alike with the sheen of our own moon, and with the kerchief that bound her head. A black kersey gown, falling in voluminous folds, and contrasting singularly with the

tight sleeve reaching to her elbow, met half way by long black mittens, an apron of the same material as her head-gear, and the pockets of which formed no inconsiderable addition, terminated a toilet at once simple and original. Time had shadowed, but not withered her cheek; and though no bloom mantled there, or glowed on her lips, yet, when she smiled, something so ineffably sweet beamed upon the beholder, as to make its way to the heart, and to remain there for ever.

Ellen O'Farrell was an Irishwoman; notwithstanding this truth, herself and her little abode were the prototypes of everything that could be neat and picturesque in the world. A true daughter of Erin, her vivacity and hospitality of feeling won the affection of her poor neighbours, while the tinge of marvellousness that formed an essential part in the colouring of her character, rendered her an object of interest to more inquiring minds. She was Edith's nurse—the earliest friend nature had taught the infant to



love; the first aching of its little head was hushed in her bosom, and Nelly's sweet national songs were her lullaby. When opening reason brought new loveliness, her "jewel" would sit on her knee for hours, with one dimpled arm encircling her neck, and listen in speechless animation to the variegated tales of "Nelly's country;" for the child could never learn to call it by any other name. And, now, as the bud ripened into a flower, the young Edith, cherished with almost maternal care her dear old nurse; and scarcely a week passed without visiting Rochelle to know how she did. It must not be imagined either that these visits were never returned, for regularly once a year, as Miss Leslie's birth-day recurred, Widow O'Farrell would, by some means, accomplish the journey to the hall, and formally established in her ancient quarters, her darling child would rehearse on the harp those melodies of which Nelly was fondest, till night was almost gone, and a new morning was waking in the mist.

When Edith entered, her nurse was spinning, who, with distaff in hand, affectionately acknowledged the favour, then plied her wheel, and commenced a new thread, waiting for the last news from Malvern. But Edith forgot for a moment their usual topic, and came to the hearth with, "Ah, you have had your breakfast, as I see by pussy's empty saucer, and the contented way she dresses her pattes opposite the fire. I wish Tabby had been later or I earlier, that I do, *ma bonne*."

"Will my darling young lady take a cup with her old woman? 'tis many a day since I have had my tea so sweetened, and if she will be pleased another shan't go by."

"But you have had yours, Nelly."

"Why then, and what's the matter of that? I shall be able to taste the next the better, and so will Prim!"

She was busied in making preparations for the meal the instant the thought struck her, thus putting all further remonstrance on Edith's part

aside, while Prim, to denote his truly feline acquiescence, purring a legitimate song, walked to and fro, stroking his head and tail against the dame, who took from her cupboard china, the antiquity of which might have attracted the attention of the curious, displaying on her table, besides the many interesting objects of taste and necessity, a choice store of this bijouterie.

The time Nelly occupied in these preliminaries was long, which may be conceived by the movements of most old people being rather tardy; but Edith heeded not the surprise with which her unaccountable silence was regarded. She was still engaged with her adventure, diving into imaginations of what the stranger might be, and wondering whether he had left the scene of his misfortune. She had not dared to look once behind, as maidenly modesty forbade it, for somehow she felt conscious their eyes would have met; and in what way could such an indiscretion of her's be explained by him? though she knew her real reason must have been anxiety on the sufferer's account.

In this manner she pondered, when seeing Nelly toiling to raise something, and accustomed ever to assist age, she stretched out her hand, without relinquishing the subject of her reverie, but was warned back to reason by the old woman letting fall the kettle (which fortunately was empty, as it went bowling over the apartment with a startling clang); and seizing her arm, burst into the most plaintive laments, kissing it over and over again, madly asked, "how her heart's life came by such ill luck?"

This accident perfectly reclaimed Edith, who now became aware that she must be a frightful figure, from the active share she had taken in assisting the wounded man; and immediately proceeded to calm Nelly's apprehensions, recounting the whole tale as it had occurred, which was fully appreciated by her zealous listener, who commenced arranging the soiled dress with anxious fondness, quite satisfied that it was other blood than her own sweet child's which caused the alarm she had first experienced; bestowing upon

Meteor sundry caresses of approval when his deeds were told, and uttering an interjection, modulated to a grave or joyous import as each sentence of Edith's narration terminated, every act of the scene becoming reflected on the old woman's still vivid fancy.

"And now," concluded Edith, "you know my reason for not returning home immediately, and why I have invaded your hospitality, *ma bonne*."

"'Tis just the very best why in the world, and neatly spoken, *ma vourneen*; to say the very least it would be ungraceful and unmaidenly to cross the common till we had some fair surety you might not meet either of they two gentlemen."

Their converse on this topic was interrupted by the brisk entrance of Nelly's servant, who was going to speak, when, seeing Edith, she instantly closed her mouth, in the gravest forgetfulness of all she had to say, and crossing her hands on her chest, made her most deferential curtsey; then, tucking up one corner of her apron, raised the prostrate kettle, which, filling with the clearest

spring-water, she placed upon the fire, and bestowing a general poke through the coals, seemed satisfied with its comfortable situation upon a promising blaze, and retired.

Mrs. O'Farrell's "serving maid," as she designated herself, was an active, intelligent, dark-eyed girl, whose height and appearance argued her scarcely more than twelve; but, as her mother declared her to be nearly half-past fifteen, we must acquiesce in the assurance from so interested a quarter. In her own words, "she was daughter of one of the neighbours," and Nelly gave her the bit and sup, and the clothes on her back besides the teaching; which the good mother prized most, as Mrs. O'Farrell knew what a servant ought to be. She therefore felt highly promoted by the old lady's having taken a liking to Maggy, "for 'twould be the setting up and making of the girl, as she must in all reason come out in no time fitted for the situation of a real servant, with a good introduction too;" justly guessing that in any request of Widow O'Farrell's

Miss Leslie would take an interest; a kind word from such a quarter performing wonders, Maggy might become, "who knows? lady's-maid directly."

That she did credit to her present place was proved by the spotless pipe-clayed hearth, on which the one iron foot of the fender glittered, and the shining array of pewter plates, dishes, and etceteras on the old oak dresser, the massive carving of which shone to expression; nor were the rails of her mistress's high-back chair forgotten, nor the spinning apparatus; even down to the legs of the table, everything confessed her a tidy girl, and promised the fulfilment of her parent's expectations. But we must hesitate at the climax at which they arrived—it, at present, appearing indefinite whether, taking into consideration every inch that might be added to her diminutive form in the most flattering perspective, she should be able to reach the aristocratic head of a would-be belle; putting out of thought, as her mother did, the scientific accomplishments

of dressing hair, or whether she could robe the substantial shoulders of a fair, but too fat *élégante*, who is eternally in the ball-room, vainly endeavouring to fine herself down to what she speculatively terms "looking interesting," (the only thing she wants to make her perfect) : while poor Maggy's inbred quick movements, when the *cau-de-Cologne* was beckoned for, would be of essential injury to the nerves of these aimed-at languids, who recline on a *chaise longue* all day, after waltzing all night; besides Maggy was unfortunately too pretty to be in close attendance upon the early fading charms of party-worn young ladies. These and sundry other negatives stood in the way of Mrs. Burns' daughter, of which she was happily ignorant, as perhaps the girl would suit a less arduous place, before such natural-inferences as her parent choose to draw could be questioned, who might still rejoice in the superiority of her child's education.

The bright drops that rested on the lid of the kettle had fallen one by one, and hissing, died in



the glowing fire ; then came a long pause, which was terminated by the regular life-like breathing of the metallic creature, whose voice, disdaining any longer restraint, raised the cover, and sung out a merry peal. This was the sign which Nelly strictly watched for making the tea; and instantly performing the duty it indicated, (after allowing proper time to draw,) seemed satisfied with the flavour of the souchong, and the meal was discussed *entirely* to her satisfaction, *barring* the egg, which had been taken out of the nest by herself for her "own child," which proved to be the one that had been placed there for months previous, to teach the hen her duty, and unfortunately was boiled instead of the new-laid one, which she vowed was so like it "that, for the matter of a doubt, it was all but the same." Then looking seriously at Edith, and thinking aloud, "she could not tax her mind," she said, "with what it meant; but if such things were to be put belief in, no surer sign could be of bitter bad luck, the more

is the pity to one of their two selves, or may be *both*."

"But you know," returned Edith, "I am not the least superstitious; and though many things you tell have come true, (for I could not help remarking that), yet reason teaches me not to place faith in casualties."

"You are right, most right, ma vourneen! the laughing rose can't weep itself, and knows not what the heart's tear is, till a shower comes, and makes all gloom-like its beauty."

"Oh, my own Nelly! there is not a prettier thing in nature than the rose in a mist; I could kiss it, while the last rain-star glistened there."

"'Twould make my old eyes cry to think on the sad thing—its soul is gone—where is the scent, ma vourneen?"

"That only takes flight for a time, and with the sun returns, bringing superior fragrance."

"There now, my sweet nursling, you have come to the last best finish of all, and may the sunlight

of joy, love, and hope, dry the brackish dew that would stain my darling's cheek."

"You could not mean the rose for me?" said Edith, starting. "Oh, Nelly! say no, never! no!" raising her face with a beseeching look; but meeting a tear in Nelly's eye, she drooped her lovely head in painful thought.

"And 'tis I myself would be the last born woman to give my jewel the least morsel of grief," exclaimed Nelly, folding the young girl in her arms. "My more than everything! you must not heed so deeply what all old croaking creatures tell the young and the spiritsome. I was but repeating the words of my mother before me, (bless her memory!) In one bare single instance they came true; for Ellen Mc. Mahon, without a pain or an ache of head or heart, became widow O'Farrell with a deal of sorrow in her days. And your angel-mother, you say, is so much better, and I believe it."

"She is indeed, Nelly, and looks most beautiful!"

Here a sigh escaped the old woman, who, coughing to hide it, said: "don't speak of looks, my child, for they are deceitful; 'tis the every symptom else I mind."

All Edith's thoughts were at home in a moment, a weight was on her spirits with that too clearly-noted sigh, and she found it was necessary to see her dear parent once more to dispel the sensation. She accordingly prepared to depart; but recurring accidentally to the events of the morning, delayed for the purpose of reminding Nelly to discover, if possible, who the wounded man was, and what had become of him; to which the dame nodded, and looking confidential, fully assured her, "she would do that same;" and proceeded (thinking aloud): "Poor dear gentleman! 'tis himself shan't want in caring about, while I ask after him for my sweet lady's sake. If there is a bit of gossip in the village, I know where to find the rights of it. So stay, ma vourneen, a wee minute longer."

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Here Maggy again crossed the threshold, and

began collecting the cups and saucers, displaying the dexterity of her regulations with increased assiduity before her lady patroness, as she hoped Edith one day would become.

"Maggy, it seems to me you have something on your mind," said the old woman, steadily eyeing her protégée.

"No, ma'am, miss," replied the girl, colouring to her temples, "only the gentleman, ma'am, the whole village has been talking about."

"And what of the gentleman?"

"He had a terrible bad fall, awhile he was hunting with the hounds and the horses over the common yonder; 'twas measter Joe the ostler of the Pipe and Tumbler as told me, he had to go to Randon for a post-chay, to take him all the ways to the doctor's."

"Have you a notion of his name?"

"I never knew a word of that, nor did Joe, for I asked him. Joe heard the friend like who was with him say as how his horse fell in a hole, which tumbled the poor gentleman off, cutting

his head open, upon a piece of scraggy stone, when the ugly-natured animal run away after the fox as if nothing had happened."

"And is this all you know?" inquired Nelly.

"All, ma'am—miss!" said the girl, looking at Edith, whose nervous attention her quick eye soon detected, and therefore Maggy addressed her especially, thinking to be rewarded by some token of satisfied interest: thus wringing from Edith an unguarded "thank you," who left the cottage precipitately, feeling more than half discovered—her own ideas so distinctly arrayed in her mind, that she supposed them told to others by mere reflection.

The waste appeared more bare than usual; Meteor serious and dull; something damped the ardour of her spirits, and waked a pain in her young heart. But soon in the arms of her mother, Edith forget, in that dear delight, the shadow of melancholy.

## CHAPTER II.

Is it war? at once are borne  
 Words like notes of martial horn.  
 Is it love? comes some sweet tale  
 Like that of the nightingale.

L. E. L.

James Leslie, the younger son of the baronet of that name, was born in the days when soldiers were scarce, but men not so rare as to be recruited in the cradle, lieutenants playing marbles, and captains at school. When his hand was developed enough to compass the hilt of his sword, and his strength sufficient to carry it, the young gentleman was presented with a cornetcy in the ——th dragoons, though the ill fit of the shako for some



time quite prevented his seeing what he was about, and his boots sadly encumbered his evolutions; yet he was of quick apprehension, and a zealous soldier. As these talents were the most considered, he soon grew out of all inconvenience, and became famed for prowess. He had a war-loving spirit, that banished from his breast all cowardly apprehensions; and though he fully possessed a soldier's candid generosity to his defenceless foe, he viewed in the field of battle its fallen brave, as the slippery but legitimate stepping-stones to ambition—the beacon on which he kept his eye steadily fixed; overlooking in that ardent gaze a phalanx of terrors he must inevitably meet, whether to pass unscathed he left to propitious fortune, quite engrossed with the alluring prospect of rank and eclat; Lethe flowed gently over any sufferings he underwent, if succeeding in attaining his favourite end.

In the summer of glory, he became a colonel. Not one of that class latter days have created, acquiring the height by their measure of gold;

some of whom, when first elevated to the rank, uneasily shoulder its responsibility ; at one time vacillating and capricious, at another straining the power of their official prerogative to keep in subjection, and discipline *to themselves*, their inferiors alone in rank.

James Lealie showed his scars, and received the well-earned tribute, as he did the sword of his conquered enemy.

At this crisis, his regiment was ordered home, and without resigning the profession that gained him honours, our gallant colonel asked the hand of Lady Jane de l'Aire, a beauty in her own right ; who, consenting to share fortune's favours with him, little thought when their happy marriage was solemnised, that a pall should one day hide her widowed heart.

A few short years that seemed to fly, had given them an only boy, and rendered them inestimably dear to each other ; when Europe, heaving with apprehension at the covetous glance of Napoleon,

arraigned her chivalry to spoil this eagle's borrowed plumes.

Answering the call of his country, Colonel Leslie, accompanied by the young George, who, dauntless and wayward, could not exist in another element than that of his father, took an affectionate farewell of all their beloved family, breathing hope in each caress, and were at their posts with the reveillée.

Napoleon's power was cramped by the energy with which he was followed up, and scarcely eluding hitherto the wary sentinel-spirit that guarded our army, at Waterloo he bowed his shorn head to England's conquering hero.

Ever in danger's fearful forehead, General Leslie, winning his last palm, fell with it on the bloody field that terminated the campaign of a thousand lives.

During the war, the fluctuating accounts Lady Jane received from her husband and child wore out her constitution, and after lingering from year to year in a kind of enchanted existence, seeming only to live till she might see

them once more, this blessing was hardly granted her, and the soldiers rested on their arms, when intelligence of Bonaparte's escape flew from rank to rank; the whole military world was again in motion, and the fatal news of General Leslie's death in the memorable battle which ensued sealed his wife's doom.

Thus bereft of his dearest earthly friends, Captain George Leslie found himself upon landing on England's hospitable shores. He did hope to have comforted the last days of his mother—this fond anticipation was denied him—and now, alone in the wide world, he felt the army as necessary to the occupation of his mind as it had hitherto been a break-water to the torrent of his imagination, which, in his boyhood, had conveyed him with aërial elasticity to the highest regions of romance; whose champion, inheriting all his ancestors' deeds of fame, and his invincible sword, the merits of which legions of legions had transmitted with verbal munificence from great grand-sires to grand-dames:

thus, folded in pristine superstition, and finally presented to its lord, causes him to revere this heir-loom as the tutelar deity of his fortunes, rendering him fearless in danger, and confident in victory, he gains new bearings for his shield, perpetuating in lore and in song the brilliancy of his scutcheon and the lady of his love!—for ladies are the aroma of our existence, the solace and reward of our most elaborate toils.

In ardency of spirit, George Leslie emulated this fabled hero, already viewing the palms of Mars wreathed for his brow; even in these comparatively degenerate days, he dared hope to become the knight of adventure, a necromancer of some fair one's brightest smile.

But early in his course, Leslie was compelled to know that there had been such things as trials in store for him—that this is a sorrowful world—and few pass through it without tasting some of its bitterness. We create happiness in idea—happiness we are ever endeavouring to reach; but it no sooner dawns, than sorrow dashes it into

oblivion! We snatch at shadows, which our flattering fancy paint as beautiful, but from sage experience they prove dull and tarnished!

The calm that succeeded the storm of affairs half over the universe, accorded ill with his perturbed feelings. He was angry with himself for surviving the coronation of renown at the battle of Waterloo. Had his life ebbed to its immortal source, while the cannon roared, or combined trumpets proclaimed his country victorious, the knowledge of this two-fold loss had been spared him, and a seared mind could not then have been united to bodily sufferings. His blood had gemmed the stream that bore proud England's banners to eternal fame, but it was the last, most home-thrust of all that warped the spring of his youthful energy, and mildewed, for a time, every thought.

He was roused from this apathy by his regiment receiving orders to embark for Ireland, its destination bringing to his recollection, in rather romantic force, an incident which occurred

during the continental campaign. Searching immediately in his desk, he found, among a few carefully preserved papers, a small packet tied with a sword-knot, which appeared very sacred in his eyes, for he did not dare to open it, but sighed, smiled, and then replaced it with attention.

When his regiment was fairly established in its new quarters, Leslie set out on horseback, in the direction the scarcely intelligible writing outside the treasured packet indicated. At first he rode with confidence in his right selection of the way, when coming to a cross, (A) at the foot of which sat a young woman in visible rags, with one child bound at her back, and another in her arms—he accosted her, in hopes of having his route most clearly defined; but she answered his queries with a long tale of her woes, showing her bleeding feet, and saying, “she was a weary, worn thraveller, had first come through Ballynamona, where she and the childher had a pratee, and sorra a bit else; for, she would not tell his

honour a lie, as Father Flanagan, who married her same self to Mike Reardon, used to say, it would send her to purgatory straighter than any other sin." In fact, "that she was a grate stranger intirely in those parts, and hoped his honour would save the crathurs from starvation with the laste bit o' brass in life; for only to look in their sweet innocent faces would make the sun melt. As to her poor wake body, it could'nt do no more than it did for them. Just thereabouts none o' the people knew her, and she was much like a cat in a strange kitchen, and didn't 'know the cupboard where to find the milk.'"

New in the country, and unaccustomed to their begging petitions, the quaint originality of this appeal quite interested Leslie in her favour, for, taking from his purse a piece of money, he put it in the poor creature's hand, who thanked him by looking in his face with uncontrollable astonishment, exclaiming, "Arrah, now, my little soft un! has your mother any more like you?"

Excessively amused and surprised by this



moral upon his credulity, Lealie rode on in quest of a guide, which now seemed absolutely necessary, to extricate him from the labyrinth of intersecting and bisecting lanes he stumbled upon at every step, and which seemed to vie with each other in natural pit-falls. He felt that Ireland well deserved the title of "old," for its wrinkles were innumerable; and sympathetically did he grieve over the state of the country, when his horse lost a second shoe. He had heard of Irish travelling, but never dreamed objects were so un-get-at-able, and laid it down as a fact, that the natives, whose ideas flowed so fast as to give rise to the belief that they seldom met with opposition, must be supplied with wings on emergencies like his.

Various were his conjectures and counter surmises upon this subject, when meeting a little intelligent tatterdemallion, carrying his shoes, as is the wont of these children of Erin, (who, ignorant in thought and habit of the perception of comfort, and having peculiarity in extravagance,

always spend their feet when their shoes are in question, donning the latter with their genuine mantle of pride, upon the entrance of a bit of town, or any other place where it is a duty incumbent on their dignity to look "dacent"). Leslie asked the lad "if he could inform him where he was."

"And is it myself you'd be afther axing sitch a hard question? Why thin, I'll just tell ye; it is backin' as tidy a bit of flesh as ever desarved the name of horse! To be sure the poor baste has lost his irons, so now the murther's out, and I hope you're set all fair and aisy in yer mind."

Leslie became angry, and threatened the urchin; but this was not the way to get anything out of Paddy, who gave him a look as if to spell the soldier from head to foot, regarding his sword as he would a bull-rush; and, declaring "a shil-lelah might understand his coat better," with a fearless tread proceeded on his route. Confounded by this assurance, Leslie stood for a second

puzzled what to do ; but having had an insight into the character of the people, determined not to be foiled again ; so merely asked, pointing in the direction the chart of his mind indicated, "Where does this road go to?"

The boy looked over his shoulder, without interrupting his pace, and when Leslie had ceased speaking, answered : "I'm sure I don't know, for it's always here when I come by." With the last words clearing a ditch, and crossing the fields, leisurely intent upon his own business.

However, this characteristic reply discouraged not Leslie's predilection for the road, which he traversed accordingly in re-established good humour.

The monotonous Purtach dhuv, or Black Bog, commanded the whole view on his right hand ; here and there a hovel smoked its tenability ; on the (B) square-cut lakes, from which the turf had been taken, floated numerous flocks of wild ducks, that rose with one consent as he approached, and settled into their former tranquillity

when out of danger's range. The solitary grave-looking goat slowly raised its long beard from the weeds it was picking over, to find a hardly-earned existence; or some anatomical horse neighed its notice of Leslie's steed, at which the pampered animal shyed, as if recognising in the voice and air of the creature a hungry cry from the mouth of the kennel. On the left were broad and beautiful woods, sprinkled with fields of Erin's own emerald brilliancy, which, growing more luxuriant as he progressed, Leslie's thoughts began to recur to an old and almost forsaken channel, as he fancied his journey might be nearly accomplished. Nor had he long to conjecture, for a turn in the road brought him to the entrance of a noble park; and his repeated blows on the reverberating gates summoned the attendance of a no smaller personage than his recent acquaintance, who, pulling his forelock to Leslie, was the first to speak, saying, "Had yur honour axed the way to Carrigvhair, 'tis Corny Beardon myself would have made it plain and

smooth with the greatest pleasure in life—faix I would !”

The name of the place satisfied all Leslie's inquisitiveness, and bestowing a look of humorous forgiveness on the lad, he rode up the avenue of gnarled oaks, whose massive limbs lay on the ground, obtaining sure support.

This magnificent approach was of great extent ; but the mansion being situated on an eminence, became visible nearly the whole way, and Leslie had full time to conceive its most undefined limits ; for the architect had originally intended its extension far beyond the ground at present occupied, which appeared from the abrupt termination of the angles, and one wing only belonged to the principal part, rising very awkwardly and helplessly in view of its skeleton sister, on which the ivy began to climb, giving a rueful appearance to its modern architecture, and white marble-looking stone. The growth of the timber in the park, and the weather-beaten remnant of a tower, overhanging as with the wakeful eye of an hoary

age this modern namesake, proved Carrigvhair to have been a place of senior pretension in ages far gone ; and Leslie almost groaned when he thought, that the residence which bore the hereditary appellation was grinding under its feet the ruins of some ancient castle, whose walls had echoed back minstrelsy unrivalled, and where perhaps the oldest records of hospitality were witnessed by hundreds of participators in its lord's bounty. He felt that the splendid but imperfect pile that stood there, desecrated holy earth, and for a moment wished those picturesque remains his fancy had created, still lived for the moonlight to play in.

But his ideas were all corrected, when he asked at the colonnaded portico, "whether Miss Dermod was at home?" and being answered in the affirmative, dismounted; and delivering his horse into the charge of a groom, who lost no time in scanning its points all over, Leslie followed the talkative, inquisitive butler, through a spacious and exquisitely designed hall, but (C)

unfinished like the exterior of the house; for the plaister ornaments of the ceiling and sides were without paint, gilding, or colouring of any description, and the brick and mortar of some parts scarcely hid by a suspicion of white-wash.

He was ushered into a morning room, which appeared but recently abdicated; there lay on the table an open work-box, a skein of thread, and various objects of ladies' knick-knackery, besides a very small thimble, which the idle soldier commenced trying on immediately, and wondering how it could fit anybody's finger. He raised his eyes accidentally, and discovered a picture of the most beautiful woman he thought he had ever seen, which immediately riveted his whole attention. That portrait was his ideal of perfection. He was awakened from this paralysis of every faculty but attention to one object, by the plaintive accents of a female voice, speaking low but emphatically, "You knew *him* then?"

"Him," repeated Leslie with a start, as he encountered the charming original of his trance.

"My father!" deferentially, yet painfully, fondly repeated the girl, "you knew my father?"

One glance more at the wall convinced Leslie of her meaning; there was another portrait he had overlooked; it was that of the captain—his lost friend—the parent of this lovely creature.

"Yes, madam," returned Leslie, scarcely knowing what he said, "it is three years since"——

"Three long years," she sighed, looking down at her mourning habiliments.

He recovered himself in a moment, and bowing, asked: "I have the honour of addressing Miss Dermod?"

"You are right, Captain Leslie," laying his card on the table.

"One of my best friends," resumed Leslie, regarding the picture, "deputed me to present this to his daughter."

She trembled violently as she took the packet, and her features exhibiting contending emotions while she read, Leslie was going to retire; but she conjured him to stay with such earnestness



as to oblige his compliance. In opening the packet something had fallen out, which Leslie now perceived, stooped, and offered her—a curl of grey hair. She was greatly affected when she took it, repeating, “how white! how very white!” and regarding the dear relic with so much intensity that each single hair seemed noted. Pale as the locks she held, Leslie acknowledged to himself that Miss Dermod had indeed a most seraphic countenance. She was too much engrossed with Leslie’s business to think of his presence having any other object; and making an effort to speak of what lay nearest her heart, “Captain Leslie, you will inform me of what you know concerning the latest moments of my father!”

Seeing him hesitate, “Fear not for me,” she said, “I am prepared to go through with it all; and as a prelude, you may conceive the intense interest I take in this melancholy subject, having only had it officially announced, that he died

bravely. From the lips of a friend each word will be dreadfully valuable."

Leslie accordingly related the tale as concisely as possible, which was nearly as follows. After the battle of ——— Leslie was lying in his tent, wounded, (waiting for the surgeon, who was expected in attendance every moment) when a soldier covered with blood and dust entered, and kneeling at his feet, begged him "for the love of heaven to go to his dear master, Captain Dermod, who had received his death-shot, and had something to communicate." This was all the poor fellow could articulate—and died on the spot.

Ill as he was, Leslie rose, and betook himself to the part of the field Captain Dermod's corps had occupied, where he found his friend, who had been left for dead, leaning with his back against a cannon. He revived on seeing Leslie, cut a lock of hair from his head, placed it in the letter containing his last injunctions, on which he wrote a few words with a pencil, and Leslie tied the packet under his direction; at the same time

promising to deliver this legacy of love into his daughter's hand, if he lived ; and if he fell, it was to perish with him, as Captain Dermod requested the sacred deposit should never be bequeathed to other hands.

"He asked," continued Leslie, "whether a soldier had sent me to him, and your noble father shed tears when he knew the poor fellow's fate, said he had crawled away when he heard him wish for me, and desired me to tell his daughter that it was this faithful creature (her foster brother) who, after receiving a mortal wound, fighting by his master's side, had, with his last energy of affection, performed this vital service."

"Vital indeed !" cried Miss Dermod, covering her forehead with both hands, endeavouring to extinguish her emotion. After a long pause, she spoke, grieving aloud, "My poor Nelly! you have lost your son, and I!—oh, what have I lost?"

The young man prudently omitted Captain Dermod's last blessing, which was accompanied by a wish that Leslie and his darling child might one

day be united, as he knew no two who were better suited for each other, and that if Leslie should succeed in gaining the affections of one he had never seen, he was to remember that a father's last breath gave her to him.

That day Miss Dermod bade Leslie a grateful adieu, desiring him to call as soon as convenient, when she would introduce him to her friends.

In a short time he was quite at home at Carrigvhair, and being a "lady's man" (as the phrase is) became a favourite with the kind-hearted Mrs. Evans, and interfered not with the fox-hunting propensities of her husband, of whose good cheer he partook, and to whose jokes he listened; while Miss Dermod, between whom and Leslie a tacit confidence subsisted since their introduction, took a strange delight in showing him the completed and projected beauties her father had intended for this house of his ancestors: but Carrigvhair being an entailed estate, the death of her only brother put a stop to his ambitious views; for the heir-at-law was a far distant relation, whom

her father disliked exceedingly, but whom, Edith Dermod said, she could never forget to thank for his generous care of an orphan, whom he would not permit to leave the house in which she was born, and considered in the same degree related to himself and his wife as to her parents, and having no children of their own, they loved her nearly as dearly.

Leslie's regiment was reduced, and he seriously thought that if the maid of Carrigvhair would consent to become his bride, he would retire to his native country, and live in peace and love. The attachment on his part was decided; and when he mentioned her father's approval, the lovely girl surrendered all her heart at once in absolute submission.

Mr. and Mrs. Evans gave a grand entertainment on the event of Miss Dermod's marriage; and Edith left the hall of her fathers to begin life anew. She felt as the carriage drove through the great gates, that she bade this once happy home farewell for ever, and wept, as a turn in the

road closed her view—that turn which had often made radiant her husband's face, when love was the watchword that ushered him through the gates.

"Ah, ma'am," said her foster-mother, "if your papa had not gone to the wars, Carrigvhair might still be our own, as it was by rights."

Though Nelly O'Farrell thought no good would come of pulling down the old stones to make way for new ones, that did not belong at all, at all to the name; and ever since they were put above themselves did nothing but mock at what they ought to be proud of; the wrinkled bit of greatness that remained—that blessed tower—where she had often and often *hushoed* her child, and the poor dear darling young master, and which Mr. Dermod had left standing to please the *missus*, who could not bear to destroy the nursery of the *childhers babby* days, and who, (sweet soul!) would not die easy till she was taken to the same." Nelly said that, "of her own sorrows, though they were *main*

great, she spoke not more than natural; but when the bright pride of the Dermods was to be seen no more, she could not help feeling sore grief-struck. Ochone! ochone!"

Leslie viewed with interest every part of the well-known road, and when they arrived at the cross, was surprised by the same female form he had before seen. She was now kneeling, with her wild eyes raised to the heavens, her black hair floating on her naked arms, while his little friend Corny Reardon sat on a stone beneath her, with the two children in his lap, and his head bent over them.

"Here is ill-luck," cried Nelly, "Judy Reardon praying for her dead man."

"Not this time," said Corny, who now came up, "as my brothers can show, for mother never parts with them when she prays for dad. She is asking her namesake saint to give the last of the master's blood, Miss Edith, a good husband, and fair luck all her life. 'Tis the whole and sole truth I am after telling this minute."

"And believe you as far as I can, I do, my child!" answered Nelly; "and may all the saints in the calendar speed you!" adding in a lower voice, "*if they can*;" and, throwing him a tenpenny, "that's what your mother's son is fondest of, and the last token you will receive from myself."

Upon Leslie asking about the party they had just passed, Nelly told him that Judy Reardon was a notorious beggar, and often sitting or praying at that cross; "and," she added, "poor Judy could not be blamed much for her evil notions, as how it fell out came this way. She was young and likely when an honest lad took a fancy to her, and Judy was made Mrs. Michael Reardon; Corny was their son; and they lived as happy as the days were long; but Micky would go for a *soger*, and follow the master to the wars; and sure enough the poor fellow was killed in the first battle he saw, which Judy no sooner knew than she went stark staring mad, and not long after had two fine boys, who, poor dears, were



both born *innocents*. She never got wisdom again, but was remarkable for her great slyness, and the out-of-the-way lies she told. She had a snug cabin, and a tidy slip of land; but she hated the place since Mikey's death, and loved the rain, and the wind, and the snow. Corny was employed by Madam Evans for charity's sake, in going errands, and doing a wonder of little things about the house, at which he was fully apt, for the lad had a deal of wit; but herself did not warm to him, for he had not a tender nature, and was rather given to forget truth when it stood in the way of his liking."

She ended her tale by informing Leslie, "that it was a known, acknowledged, and settled fact, that whoever saw Judy Reardon praying for her dead man was sure to come into misfortune, sooner or later, as she told her beads for him one night when the moon is full, and all night long every month regularly; and as she was supposed to be in league with spirits when she prayed *out of that time, they* had a hand in it and meant ill.

Nelly O'Farrell was the only remnant of Carrigvhair Mrs. Leslie took with her to England. She had been her attendant from infancy, and this early association rendered them essential to each other; Nelly declaring "she would not leave her own lady for more than the world was worth, she was a lone woman, and had not now another link of a long chain left to bind her to earth but this bright one.

Nelly was very proud of the O'Farrells' ancestry, and often entered into full length details of their heroic deeds, which, however, was always connected with the Dermods, to whom (in her own words) they in a manner belonged, their grandfather's great grandfathers being first brought into notice as hereditary shield-bearers to the lords of Carrigvhair—the self-same shield they sat under in the halls of Tara. One of the O'Farrells, named Murtough, played so beautifully on his harp as to enchant the senses of the great St. Patrick himself, who slept for a whole hour and more in the middle of the day, and

when he awoke gave Murtough a particular and special blessing; and another, in later days, cut off his arm with his battle-axe and died, after the long-lived parliament was broken up, as there was no more pride in carrying his lord's shield to the grand doings at Teamour. What connected them most with the family was, the young Dermods had been nurtured (as she expressed it) by the O'Farrells in every generation. Nelly always ended the catalogue of the brave O'Farrells' exploits—national and domestic—with the painful but consoling reflection, that her gallant boy—the last of the right side of her family—in heartful fidelity was united in death with a Dermod!"

Malvern hall, in the lovely shire of Devon, became the permanent residence of Mr. and Mrs. Leslie. Nelly liked Devon, because it was the only county she had seen in her travels through great England, that brought her a small remembrance of "*ould* Ireland;" and *ould* times came quite back, and remained at home, when she clasped in her arms Edith Leslie; "for her little

young jewel," she said, "she could live life over again."

Mrs Lealie cared not for society when her husband and child were near, and naturally of a fine mind and contemplative disposition, shunned the crowd to meditate in the arbour; while Leslie, whose previous existence had been one of superlative agitation, rejoiced in the new life that country seasons brought with them. When spring budded, he caught vigour from the birth of nature. Summer shone warm and welcome, and autumn brought its sweets. How different, and far more lovely, than inspecting the accoutrements of the flower of his country's youth, leading them on to deadly glory, and reaping a blood-bought harvest! Instead of fortifying the camp for winter security against the enemy, Lealie superintended his gardener in trenching the evergreens and strawberries, and placing redoubts before the frost. Again, the internal economy was a delicious contrast. In opposition to the routine of smoking, drilling, drinking, or

foraging, and getting shot, was the tranquil fireside, the sweet voice of his wife, or the varied melody of his little charmer, who said, "Papa," with so much feeling, that an angel might have listened and smiled.

Mrs. Leslie devoted herself from her darling's lieping childhood to the education of her developing intellect and generous dispositions, diluting wholesome counsels with lavish indulgences. No preparatory or finishing school came within the pale of her thoughts. She knew the merits of governesses, when parents felt instruction a task too arduous for their deficient acquirements, or that time, from their ideas of pleasure, was too precious to be spared; Mrs. Leslie could not admit another mother of her daughter's mind to rise superior to one who claimed all that sacred name.

Edith, who became loved when an infant, now, from her grateful veneration, was adored by her parents as a thinking being. Her mother had tilled a fruitful soil—one which was capable of rendering every blessing, and that which she

prized above others—gratitude. Gratitude is the most essential of qualities; it is the germ of friendship, which buds into affection—the sweetest return a child can bestow on a parent—all that parent requires after many years of laborious care, many a moment of anxious thought, and a world of prayers and tears! It is the bond of unity—the soul of society—in short, it is the finest and, generally, the least cultivated of our higher sentiments.

Edith loved these dear relations affectionately, their opinion was an oracle, the least indisposition of theirs was agony to her; she seemed to feel the same pain when they suffered, and the same joy when they were pleased.

## CHAPTER III.

Yes, thou art very young, and youth,  
Like light, should round thee fling  
The sunshine thrown round morning's hour,  
The gladness given to spring :  
And yet upon thy brow is wrought  
The darkness of that deeper thought,  
Which future time should bring.

L. E. L.

Each year gave a more sentimental expression to the young Edith's every feature, as it ushered in that beaming age when hopes are boundless, joys cloudless, candour fearless, and time forgotten, or only told in blushes. Nelly saw her bright child mellow into a beautiful woman with an enraptured transparent smile, declaring at

once her pride and her love. Then a sigh came, but so long after that it must have taken a vision of thought to reach it ; for, in this instance, (as in many others that our worldly affairs create) there was an evident connexion between the joyful and sad. She began telling on her fingers score after score, enumerating three ; and, pausing for a moment, went nearly over them again, resting abruptly on her wedding-ring. "Stop there," she said, and a sister-sigh was born. "The pretty blossom," she continued, "that I shall keep in my heart of hearts, till I go down to the ground, whispers as softly as a flower can, that my time is nearly filled up. Yes, *ma vourneen* ! one year yet to come, and myself will be the withered three-score and ten. It may hap that soon, very soon I'll die, and leave my darling to short suns, and biting frosts, on life's jostling highway. May the wheels of misfortune never crush her angel part, but may that gentle spirit rise from its mangled earth, and kiss the dews of heaven !"



In this manner Nelly O'Farrell moralised upon the close of Edith's birth-day, just three years previous to the commencement of our narrative; and being now too old to journey up and down the country (as she termed Mr. and Mrs. Leslie's occasional summer tour for health), "and could not bear," she said, "to be left in the great house, all lonesome and dreary even in that rosy season—though to be sure there was the cook, and the man of the garden, and a piping bullfinch—but with so much room to spare, these were not enough to choke the wide gap in her mind. Bully was always out of tune when Miss Edith was away, and his melancholy echoed in every corner of her shrivelled brains.

Accordingly, at her own request, Nelly was transplanted to the hamlet of Rochelle, with some effects that she had brought all the "ways from Ireland," including a few relics of china which had belonged to Norah, her great grandmother, on the Mc Mahon or father's side of her family, before she herself became by marriage an O'Far-

rell ("as her mother was before her, bred and born")—besides, a spinning wheel, made from an arbutus tree, that grew on the prettiest blooming bank of one of the very most charming lakes of Killarney, (if that could be distinguished) and given to her mother by Owen Mc. Toole at the time he courted the same, when she was young and fair; and who took the bit of wood, because it was well-made and useful, but refused Owen, "for he came of no one particular," though a nice artificer, and one who worked cleverly, as the spinning wheel was there to show.

Another of her valuables (and not the least prized) was a cat, that had been a kitten-plaything of Edith's, and which Nelly said, "she deated down upon, for her jewel's baby hands had stroked him over and over again." This cat caused her a great deal of grief, when she entered her new abode, as it would give way to its natural disposition—enamoured of locality, rather than personality—notwithstanding being carried to Rochelle day after day, for the space of a month,

it was found early each morning succeeding its removal, perseveringly exact in its wonted station, with the same curl of the tail, and head placidly erect, its eyes shut, leisurely dosing after the fatigues of the night, and enjoying imaginary heat from the empty fire-place in the nursery. At length Nelly disowned Prim, vowing, that "brutes knew just enough chicanery to be nearly as ungrateful as the masters they served."

His transportation to food and comfort contracted in Prim a habit of voluntary obedience, as his actions subsequently proved.

A short time after Nelly's proscription, finding no conductor, as usual, in attendance, and not liking to go without his dinner, puss paid a diurnal visit to the cottage, making a rule, however, of returning by night to rest in the hall, and keep the mice at a respectful distance, who, encouraged by his partial absence, were beginning actually to peep from their holes. But this arrangement did not long suit his feet, which showed evident symptoms of decay, and

being already very grey, Prim relinquished his sleeping apartment at Malvern, where he had lived undisturbed for full thirteen years, and, in Nelly's own words, now "kept company with her entirely, intending to spend his last sigh at her feet."

A tale folded everything connected with Nelly O'Farrell. "She loved to dwell in her harmless, interesting manner upon the few treasures that," she said, "were laid up in her memory," and endeared to her by circumstances, (trivial in appearance) but obtaining great extension and weight when she traced cause and effect.

The hamlet of Rochelle belonged to Mr. Leslie, and, situated in the midst of his tenantry, Nelly's busy mind found occupation in settling the differences of this little society, to the satisfaction of her ruling virtue—conscientiousness, thereby gaining a justly merited influence over every character within the sphere of her dynasty. She was, besides, a successful intercessor with their landlord, for various favours not to be represented

judiciously except by one who understands thoroughly the situation of the distressed but honest beggar.

It is indisputably necessary that a landlord should be strict in the exaction of his dues ; for by slurring over the peccadilloes of one tenant, without a just and reasonable excuse, he cheats the great whole. But how few landlords make a point of possessing the facts of an alleged case of poverty, without will, or through untoward circumstances ! Originally a proportion of such complaints being found to be false by those who have followed up the tale submitted to their generosity, (or rather to their credulity) their successors, relying on the old verdict, include many an innocent victim, who holds up his empty hands unheeded, and shows his starving family to an unrelenting eye. The horse at the plough is confiscated for the debt ; thus, all possibility of redeeming his fortune is prohibited, when a little time graciously granted would have paid his master, and saved the poor man from certain

and speedy ruin. It would be well for such responsible people not to head too readily suppositions to the detriment of a certain few, but to ponder and try lest a harsh tone be given to their feelings when the ears of their reasoning faculties will never justly open to the soul-searching accents of real distress. We very often forget, (midst the cares of this earth, which we thus permit to become engrossments) that fortune's most favoured child but holds a lease of his wealth here below, which, at the close of life, he must render back to the hand that gave it, without a single reservation—the various deeds it induced being noted in minutest detail by one more true than our finite ideas of perfection can conceive! Ought not this assurance to make us (if none other will) tremble at the bare idea of an uncharitable action?

Very tenacious in this particular was Mr. Leslie; and for want of energy to bear his cause out, he ran into the opposite extreme, permitting his tenants to pay false excuses instead of monied

realities to their credulous master—thus forging an evil he wished by all means to shun. Though valuing highly every property of truth, yet Mr. Leslie depended so little upon his own discrimination that he could never punish severely a breaker of that law of the mind, fearing the ordeal might fall upon a constitution too fragile to bear it. Arguing from wrong premises, that perhaps poverty he knew not of pleaded cogent reasons for the delinquency.

Mrs. O'Farrell's nice perception, and rightly dictated justice, satisfied all Mr. Leslie's scruples, who heeded with certain consent every plan of retribution she proposed, safe in the propriety of the suggestion. Not only was Nelly the warder of the morals of her people, but the nurse of their sick hours and the soother of their sorrows, ever wary of the right moment to give an invalid advice, when he could best support the necessary news; with the cordial to comfort the body, she presented a wholesome warning of how soon eternity might be visible; and with the nauseous

medicine she gave a heavenly hope to cheer the soul.

In this melancholy but most delicate task, she was eminently assisted by her dear mistress, and furnished with liberal funds to soften the couch of the restless sufferer.

The extreme delicacy of Mrs. Leslie's health caused her husband to relinquish society of every description, distant visiting being too great an exertion, and the circle of immediate neighbours too near to ensure tranquillity ; for, in proportion to the means, so the want of entertainment is felt by these isolated few, who, studiously attentive to etiquette at first (if they think you may be brought out, and made an acquisition) will, by degrees, fall into your habits, wait upon your fancies, and graft you upon themselves, when you imperceptibly become a part of the whole—like a day in a year, and without which unit it would not be perfect, but is never particularly noted when one counts.

The clergyman and doctor were consequently



the only visitors seen at Malvern; one of whom carries health of mind, as his talisman of entrée to the cottage or the palace. The other performs a more menial office for the body. The first is repaid by deeds, the last in them; but they balance judiciously, for both are essential to our well-being, and deserve our thanks in whatever mode they most value.

All Mr. Leslie's precautions did not prevent his shamrock fading from his grasp; he tried every air England afforded that was recommended for consumption; he kept a yacht to tempt his wife on the water (if it were only for an hour at a time); but one mile from land always confirmed his fears that she could never reach Madeira. The continent was out of the question, her strength being unequal to the fatigue of land-travelling. Within the last year, however, a great change for the better appeared in Mrs. Leslie, which persuaded her husband that he should very soon forget that an idea of losing her had cost him a pang. No foreboding tortured Edith; she had

always been accustomed to a certain degree of languor in her dear mamma, and thought it constitutional; though many of the faculty shook their heads, and the sweet child fondly kissed the delicate bloom on her parent's cheek, which she rashly fancied was the harbinger of new strength, and which she said made her pretty mamma look a perfect divinity.

Nelly watched the fruit gaining beauty every moment, every moment nearer its fall. She felt the whole sad truth, and tried to warn her darling child as indirectly as possible; for this purpose employing a chosen army of arguments masked in superstition, brought out, as she expressed it, "to serve a *raal* good turn;" and endeavoured to make an impression upon Edith's mind with the slight power she possessed over her marvellousness. These manœuvres, however well she conceived suited to her purpose, seldom took effect. At times she had recourse to more plain dealing, which wounded both, without doing permanent

good ; for Nelly, after getting half-way in giving the alarm, was herself so overcome by the pain inflicted on Edith's sensibility, that she retreated precipitately with loss.

## CHAPTER IV.

But the weird is laid, and the curse is said,  
And it rests on thine and thee.—

L. E. L.

Since Edith's last visit to Rochelle, she was (if possible) more attentive than before to each word and look of her beloved parent, whose increasing activity of mind and body she hailed as a confirmation of her dearest belief. But in her studious moments, a doubtful sense of evil, seemingly aroused by some invisible agency, intruded upon her contemplations, always interrupting their happier tenor. Agreeably to the unretrospective character of youth, she thought not of dating this *malaise* to her conversation with Nelly, but looked

forward anxiously for an occasion thence to attribute this ominous predisposition. As the real cause became less possibly apparent, Edith would smile at the superstitious cloud that she fancied enveloped her better judgment, and would dissipate by a laugh its discourteous gloom.

Such was her gesture as she sat by Mrs. Leslie's side in their favourite retreat. The bright glow of a departing sun was waning on the landscape, and tinging with its mingled light the arching architecture of boughs with which Flora had entwined the varied woodbine, whose delicate hues fell in pencilled softness on its emerald plumage, and blushed in bashful simplicity midst the many more favoured associates of the arbour. Meteor was stretched across the entrance, showing symptoms of animation only by a slight twitch of his ear, as it caught the too near buzz of some drone-bee, who, banished from the hive, sought shelter for the night in a convenient lodging.

Forgetting in her meditations the presence of any object (as we often do when engrossed by a

subject of interest), it was not till Edith heard the sound of her own voice that she felt half convinced that her mamma must have noticed it too. She raised her eyes to know the truth of her supposition. The book Mrs. Leslie was reading still hid her face. Thus, no distraction (if it existed) could be visible ; she did not move ; and Edith concluding that her laugh was unheeded, laid down the piece of cloth she was working upon, and in the most careful manner commenced disentangling a jessamine bud which had been caught in her ringlets, thinking while thus occupied, how she could have answered, had her mamma inquired the cause of her apparently merry mood.

Why she asked herself this question she knew not, and what her answer should have been she felt at a greater loss to conceive. One thing was certain, that she seemed relieved by the continued silence, and was very cautious that it should not be broken.

"Edith, my love," said Mrs. Leslie, "will you tell me what that is for?"

"That ? what ? this ? mamma," returned Edith, holding up her work, and sacrificing in the hurry of the moment the jessamine that she had taken so much pains to preserve ; two remaining hairs shortened its little life, and the severed flowers' pure white shone more lovely and singular in the beautiful girl's tresses, than when mingling among the relative stars that hung on its parent branch.

"It is a warm cloak for Margery Toms, that I hope to give her before noon to-morrow."

"A very pretty occupation surely, my love, and there are some persons who would suppose you were doing a material service to christianity by this sacrifice of your time. But I am one of those who entertain a totally different opinion on that score, and give you no commendation whatsoever. Indeed, I think there are many things more worthy of your attention, and that others

cannot do for you. Having comparative wealth, my child, why not perform a real and two-fold charity, in giving this mantle to be made by old Pearce's bed-ridden daughter? She is a nice work-woman, and submissive to your wishes in everything, besides earning money, for which she would be very grateful. My remark on this occasion is principally suggested from a fear that you might become a participator in mental delusion with those ladies who, perpetuating a great original mistake, devote their lives to the never-ending business of making clothes for the poor, conscientiously believing it their duty; and permitting the latent hope of being hereafter richly rewarded to influence their actions like a creed, forgetting, while thus engaged, that they are losing the fruits of their early education—allowing to lie dormant, talents given them (if they will) for the essential soul-service of their needy brethren, for whom more permanent good might be effected by a few words well suited, and at the same time expressed by other exertions made in



behalf of their estate, than by all the wool, or twice the cotton in the universe. It is easy to cover a naked body; but an intellectually lean constitution will stare through purple robes. If the morals of our people were more generally and charitably looked after, by a better example, and consequently by better precepts, the human being whose nature might thus be reclaimed from evil in its most deformed shapes, could (with rare instances of exception) find means to clothe himself, and content would reign in perfect serenity before dethroned vice and abdicated despair.

“When will man stock the broad lands of the mind with common sense? an endowment often talked of, but rarely possessed; and less opportunity is given to the cultivation of this choicest of grain, which ought to form the stamina of existence, than to many superfluous luxuries, and much innutritious matter.”

“What you say, mamma, is always judicious, and you must not believe that I performed this act of duty to win admiration of the description

you seem to imply. But, do you know, it has long grieved me to see Margery come to church in the worst weather with a cloak not quite large enough for a baby, and all full of holes, letting in the piercing cold, that droops (more than age) her poor body. She is so much attached to this wretched covering, (having worn it for no less than fifty years) that she cannot be prevailed upon to substitute the most superb mantle of another person's workmanship, but has actually given me the antiquated fabric for a pattern, and stayed at home until I bring her one made by myself exactly like it when it was new. This is my task, and you may imagine it is not the easiest in the world, to attempt a prominent likeness between such a shadow and a substance."

"This tender little argument convinces me of the propriety of your intentions, dearest love, and may the blessing of good Margery be fulfilled in the happiness of a youthful heart that tries to deserve it!"

"Don't talk of blessings, mamma," said Edith,

affectionately, but mournfully; "they always remind me that the well-wisher cannot live for ever; like a preface to the last tale of life, they tell me, before I read the volume, where it must end: for, to quote your own words, it is the breath whose every other earthly energy is spent, that most fervently pours out with gratitude's offering, or love's beneficence, this death-born good."

"I shall make you wise before one wrinkle of the right age comes, my child," said Mrs. Leslie, with considerable emotion, and drawing Edith closer to her: "Now, tell me, my sweet Candour! the whole why you were so cheerful just now. My thoughts were, for an instant, very gloomy, when your light soft laugh rung like a joy-bell to wake me to reason's finest, freest hope—that of seeing those I here love best united with me in a blissful immortality."

"Oh! my own darling mamma! you cannot mean—you do not believe—you are not serious—what did I say?"

"Nothing—but the gay peal that broke sudden and free from those pretty lips made me feel half as happy myself."

"I was very miserable before I uttered that laugh; somehow what you have said brings back the same dreary fog, but it is denser and more confusing."

Then with a shrinking start, as if she saw a light through the mist that scorched her eyelids as they touched it, Edith in pale agony flung her arms round her mother's neck, and articulated, with a desperately emphatic effort, "you are not going to be ill, mamma, are you?"

Conscious of her extreme sensibility, Mrs. Lealie was always particularly solicitous in removing every cause of anxiety from her daughter's mind; but on this occasion a grave sadness spread itself over her features, and without answering Edith's passionate appeal, she laid her head on the young girl's fair shoulder, and listened in breathless, tearless silence to the sobs that heaved her bosom. At last Edith had arrived at some

idea of the evil that threatened her, and what no one on earth but the mother she adored could have persuaded her to dream of. The slightest hint she had ever received came bared to her view in all its dreadful meaning. She now wondered she had not solved this mystery before, and still wondering, groaned a heavy, almost life-forgetting groan—then clasped her mother in one long and intensely calm embrace; she had caught the strained, muscular composure in her parent's every feature, and her tears seemed to congeal as they fell, so little did this effusion of nature soften the compelled rigidity of her countenance.

That moment, had the heavens fallen Edith's face could have scarcely betrayed emotion. Mrs. Leslie was satisfied, yet surprised, by this extraordinary command of external tranquillity, in one so unacquainted with the dreary scenes of life, for she well knew that the sullen surface hid a fathomless depth of misery; and resting her own aching forehead on the stainless lustre of her delicate hand, thought in earnest of entering into

conversation upon the subject of her approaching dissolution, as she felt convinced that Edith was prepared to hear the most painful truth that could be related.

"My child!" began Mrs. Leslie, with a forced emphasis, (distorting instantly this otherwise gentle, feeling word) "the will of our great Ruler determines that the nearest relations should part for a season—pray heaven it may not be for ever!"

She was here relapsing into the solemn, warning tone, mingled with something of melancholy tenderness, that suited well such an address, when Edith's sympathetic change of colour struck her accents cold, harsh, and more pitiless than before. This unnatural tone was frightfully new to Edith, and startled her pent-up sorrow to the bursting of its flood-gates.

"A bereavement like this in grief may bow my spirit to the earth, but oh! my mother! do not break the fetters of reason by issuing the mandate from above thus unkindly! I can bear all—a

still harder fate than you think—but let it be softly spoken.”

“And thou shalt, young one,” said a voice that was just heard above the breeze, and which came to Mrs. Leslie’s ears with the breath of death. She fell on the mossy carpet, looking more wraith-like than the pale gleam of the moon that lay beside her.

## CHAPTER V.

Hark ! hark ! the death-watch ticks !  
See, see, the winding sheet !  
KIRKE WHITE.

A wild shriek that seemed to rend the sinking air, scaring the rooks from their perch, and the owl from the feeble victim it had just grasped, while the bats flapped their grizzled wings, as at random they flew, summoned every human inhabitant of Malvern (but one) to the tower. That one was Mr. Leslie, who, fascinated by a tale of the war, rehearsed in its brilliant imagery those days when he, at the point of the bayonet, scarcely gasped the breath that seemed all but



gone, when his antagonist was stretched in his heart's blood before him. With a shudder the soldier viewed the gory scene, and passed on to take another life. After the engagement he joins in the pursuit with an extravagant though painful ardour. At length, the battle over, on his country's side victory triumphantly declares herself. He pauses midst the dead and the dying, shrouds his sword in its peaceful sheath, and hides the hand that held it. He feels his war-horse slip at every tread, from the animal's nostrils flow a crimson dye, and his champing bit is told by a deep streak of the same ; his red eye-balls gleam a ghastly glare of livid fire. With wary decision he guides the creature's faltering steps to some space, where a pistol might anticipate his last agony ; now so careful has the warrior become, lest the hoof of his beast should discompose the lifeless bodies of the fallen. What dread colour reached to that charger's fetlocks, and splashed his saddle-girths, the victor waits not now to consider ; but conducts him on

with as gentle and as sure a pace as that of a mother carrying her child to its rest.

Yet he sighs when this faithful friend is stretched in still death before him, for he has fallen far from his partners in fame, and not till music has thrice warned him home, does the soldier resign the rein and give a parting stroke to the foam-covered neck of his prostrate steed. As he groped his way to the camp, over embankments of human bodies, the chill north-wind howls like a host of jackalls, and night covers all with intensest gloom.

The tale was finished—peace now reigned at home and abroad—but it was long ere Captain Leslie could reconcile his senses to this aspect of affairs. The wailing of women, mingled with the groans of their fathers, husbands, and sons, all echoing the horrors of war, seemed to come full on his ear, and for a moment daunted his might; but that might had been true, and exerted in his country's defence. With this thought the veteran started from his reeling seat, and paced the cham-

ber in the fiercest flow of his warlike energy ; he stumped upon the resounding boards, and listened to the noise as the sentinel to a strange and distant tread that disturbs his lonely watch. The chairs and inoffensive ottomans he viewed as field-pieces ranged for battle, and firm and bold he wound his way among them, pertinacious in the deadly course, as a doomed man.

Again released from the grim array, he grasped at where his sword had been, when, with the first flash of reason occasioned by the disappointment his hand met, he struck his throbbing temples, and knew he was mortal, and in a mortal's drawing-room. Still he could not help, as the last shade of fancy's mad delusion was leaving him, looking with suspicion on the drooping curtains, as if an enemy lurked behind them. Each single wrinkle was speculated upon in the mind of our wary observer, for a rifle-man could not have been more cautious in concealing his person, and taking his aim than was Mr. Leslie, who stationed behind a tall fire-screen, levelled his eyes, and

brought his arms to bear upon the dark nook that fixed his attention. With strained nerves he perceived the drapery wave to and fro in uncertain folds—at length fantastic shapes crept over its surface, and the whole was lifted from the ground as if an invisible hand held it in its grasp. He was going to spring forward, and dare the space that yawned, when a figure rose like a mist before him, and so undetermined was the outline when its full height was seen, that, for the first time in his life, he believed in phantomic existence, and rubbed his eyes to clear their vision. But when he opened them, nothing was to be seen. The curtains hung placid and still—the spell was broken—and truth dawned upon his troubled feelings.

Mr. Leslie contemplated what had passed as a feverish dream, that left him melancholy and alone in the midst of dreary reality, as he began to entertain fears for the health of his delicate wife, who yet lingered abroad. He now perceived the cold air from the open door, and shivered as

it swept through the desolate chamber, and played with the carpet, which performed the part of a billowy sea revelling in its freedom. The candles at one moment were half-extinguished, the next their blazing plumes threatened the ceiling with destruction, and anon, they bow their heads and weep a river of burning wax, that glazed everything within its liquid course. Many a belle in the book of beauty was robed in transparent white, and many an ornament of fanciful design was wreathed in the same. Mr. Leslie regarded the devastation with intensely attentive apathy, till a crash of glass, followed by the louder ticking of the defenceless time-piece, as it seemed to tell of danger near, and claim a sire's care, roused him from his lethargy, when he beheld the stream, encouraged in its quantity, cool round the works, and the pendulum of the clock stood still. This caused him to look at the hour; and comparing the dial with his own watch, he rushed from the room.

"My love, my love! where are you?" he

cried, as anxiety for one dearer to him than life sped him through halls and windings, to the porch he knew she was wont to enter when returning from her garden retreat.

No sound but his fast breathing replied to the long, long sigh that terminated each inquiry.

"There is rain, and an easterly wind too; oh! 'tis death to her!" he exclaimed, as reaching the outer door he felt for the descending steps.

It was indeed a rough, wet night, and as that husband appeared under those darksome trees, the already bleaching hair was raised from his high pale forehead, and floated madly in the breeze. Like a meteor he fled through the wood, or, like a young fawn in dread—hunted by the moon.

His path for an instant was stopped by the butler, Power, who, neglecting drawing himself up and saluting in military style, (one part of his duty never omitted till then) addressed his master, with—"My mistress, sir!—Miss Edith—the bower!"

This was said in scarcely intelligible accents ; but the words sank so deep into the heart of Mr. Leslie, that for years after he heard them when he slept, and from that moment to the last of his existence, a pall seemed to hang over all his hopes. If a corner of the sombre garb was raised, it only showed a bright coffin that carried one's thoughts to the grave, whither the old man must certainly go before joy again could meet him !

Arriving at the bower, he found that fated spot surrounded by every individual of the household, as if suddenly and simultaneously collected, some of whom, with dismay portrayed in their features, intently gazed upon two breathless forms that reclined before them. An idiot cow-herd strained his neck over the shoulders of the first of the group, and in whining tones incessantly repeated, " Why don't you pick up the missus ? "

Another retainer of the family was standing on tip-toe, trying to see what could be seen ; a few of the remainder wept, and all looked eagerly for the appearance of some expected one. But no

exertion was made to raise their (perhaps) dying mistress, or the child that lay drooping over her. Poor Meteor, who had been trotting round the circle, and with true canine intelligence of expression, imploring each vacant face to be wise, and come to his assistance. At length, enraged by the passiveness of the group, and apparently determined to rouse them, he tore the skirt of the housemaid's gown, and bit through the dress, severely pinching the gardener's leg. Encouraged by the animation and disturbance this feat occasioned, Meteor was proceeding to do more serious mischief, when he caught the sound of a well known footstep.

At Mr. Leslie's presence, the whole band gave way, and the dog bounded to meet him. "What does terror make men? what women?" their master jeeringly screamed, as these servants' helplessness provoked his anger. "Were ye her passionate fellow-country people, this sad duty had not been for me."

Yet there was an apparent triumph in his woe



when the father put Edith in Power's arms, and was the first to bear from the scene the wife he adored. That she was not quite gone he knew, for a faint flush passed over her countenance, as a light from the stable boy's lantern shone full upon it; and when Meteor caressed Edith's hand, as it hung by her side, she shrank from the touch, crossing it on her breast.

Edith was soon sufficiently restored to justify Dr. Pomfret's assertion, that Miss Leslie's indisposition proved to be a shock upon the nerves, evidently occasioned by some incidental circumstance, and which, happening to so young and delicate a female, might have been more serious. He was now confident in saying, that she would sustain no other inconvenience than perhaps a slight lassitude for a day or two. This assurance from so experienced a physician ought (it would naturally be inferred) to have rendered Mr. Leslie profusely grateful to the diplomatist, who, with much expense, great personal application, and injury to his constitution during a long sojourn

upon earth, had arrived at so rational a conclusion.

Mr. Leslie did thank him for the promptness of his attention to the subject, and commended the skill he knew that he possessed ; but was not nearly so voluminous in the expression of his acknowledgments as might fulfil expectation. The fact stood thus. Mr. Leslie had been previously convinced by ocular demonstration of the nature of her revival, when the commonest restoratives were applied, and some very reasonable inferences that Edith had fainted from a natural cause, namely, alarm for her parent's life. She was now perfectly recovered, and would have been attending at that parent's couch, but the imperative M. D. (authorized by his profession, and zealous for his credit) conjured, nay, commanded, that she should be kept perfectly tranquil, and not permitted to quit her chamber. He would send a composing draught, which was to be administered immediately, and which he trusted (if his requests were strictly attended to),

would preclude the necessity of any further treatment in Miss Leslie's case. This was extremely satisfactory, and Mr. Leslie bowed his head to every word the doctor uttered, which gratified the self-esteem of this functionary; who courteously pausing that he might hear whatever his patient's father had to say, took a long breath for his next necessary speech upon so fertile a topic, as that of the various anxieties, duties, and responsibilities of his profession—gave two or three taps upon the lid of his snuff-box—assisted himself to some of its titillating contents—placed the remainder (not without its shell) in the retirement of an ample waistcoat pocket, and waited yet to be edified by Mr. Leslie's conversation, whose prolonged silence was unaccountable to him. Was it his taking a little gentle stimulus without offering to share the same with Mr. Leslie? No, this was impossible—that gentleman never took snuff. What could it be? The doctor's eyebrows meet in thought—THEY guess, and he becomes rather fidgetty.

A few indirect hems, a slight cough, and an admirably performed sneeze (which last was unquestionably singular in a person remarkable for consuming much of a certain odoriferous weed), gradually brought Mr. Leslie to feel that a great man's time is valuable, and that when he is prepared to open his mouth, the whole world should open the ears and eyes of their minds and listen, and that the gracious moment he vouchsafes to spend among them should be marked by the strictest concentration of their ideas, if capable of comprehending words of infinite syllables—speculations, propositions, deductions and evidences drawn from the depth of his learning, or inspired by the superiority of his intellect. At all events, and by all means, instead of offering a libation, which might be poured out and forgotten, memory, in honour, was bound to hoard (above her choicest remembrances) a second Mentor's condescension.

As soon as Mr. Leslie became aware that Dr. Pomfret had been silent, and was preparing his

voice for another essay, he broke suddenly into conversation, conscious that if he gave the worthy son of an Esculapian sire the rein, this thorough-bred would run fairly away, and there could be no possibility of retaining one's temper or seat till he should chose to stop. But at the present starting, it was injudicious to arrest his racer's course, as he was going to take the same heat Mr. Leslie had been walking over for the previous half hour.

Dr. Pomfret inclined his head, with the extra attentive air of one who is forced to listen when he ought to speak. Mr. Leslie had much to say, but could not now bring it forth. Having received a check at first by the doctor's dietations and prescriptions being thrust in just as he was going to ask a question, which interested him more nearly than all the philosophical explanations of simple facts, or soporific potions to compel healthy nature to wear a leaden sleep, and not e'en wake to die. He stammered to a period, corrected the dubious sentence into thrice its original ambiguity, prenonounced with a quaverous shake the usually

spare word, "what," and then, with the tears starting to his eyes, unable to command more explicit terms—hurriedly and agitatedly exclaimed: "What do you think of Mrs. Lealie, sir?"

As most of the faculty generally and wisely do, our doctor had reserved his worst case to be commented upon last, and but slightly (if at all) that night. Therefore insisting that quiet should be preserved, and desiring her attendant to regulate the temperature of her lady's room by the thermometer, he hoped next day to satisfy himself whether he was to shake his head, or smiling, to promise a certain soon convalescence.

But this very decided question of Mr. Lealie's must have an answer; for which some reflection would be necessary. The doctor accordingly rose from the easy chair on which he had been lounging, and pulling out of its deep recess a large professional silver watch, intimated to the suffering husband that he would feel his patient's pulse once more, before he gave his opinion.

Long and anxiously did Mr. Leslie wait, while

this ceremony was being gone through, in his wife's apartment ; impatient, he called her maid ; but Hipps only said, " that the doctor looked very serious, and sat very still—that her mistress was asleep, and the doctor told her, he wished to remain a little longer, that he might hear more of her *inspiration*, to certify whether the air went straight to her lungs ; as, when he just came into the room, he thought it was *confounded*, and that she did not fetch her breath well ; but at two o'clock (of which hour it just wanted sixteen minutes and a half) she was to wake her mistress that she might take the tonic mixture that Dr. Pomfret had *proscribed* ; after which, in about half an hour, she was to take a sleeping draught and three cordials ; so she supposed the doctor must be going home to prepare the drugs and send them."

This satisfactory colloquy was hardly over, and Hipps returned to her charge, when Dr. Pomfret's foot was heard measuring the distance to the study, in all " the poetry of motion," so softly

and stealthily did that man of weight convey himself into Mr. Leslie's presence to bid him adieu, adding, "that a very material medicine was to be compounded by him, and that he must hasten to the performance of this duty." At the same time Mr. Leslie was cautioned "not to hesitate in knocking him up, if it was deemed necessary, and that either of his patients required his attention in the night. Mrs. Leslie was then very composed, but he would judge better of her case in the morning."

So, buttoning up his mackintosh close to the chin, Dr. Pomfret warned Mr. Leslie not to escort him to the door, lest he should be caught by the night air, and (with a wink of his eye) "come under my visiting list"—assured him "he would make Malvern his earliest walk next day"—gave him a very comforting shake of the hand, and left the house followed by a sigh from Mr. Leslie. "*Curæ leves loquentur in gentes stupent.*"



## CHAPTER VI.

Like the sun, thy presence glowing,  
Clothes the meanest things in light;  
And when thou, like him, art going,  
Loveliest objects fade in night.

All things look'd so bright about thee,  
That they nothing seem without thee;  
By that pure and lucid mind  
Earthly things were too refined.

The silence that pervaded Malvern during the dark hours which succeeded these events was almost unearthly, and dismally boded calamity. It was unlike that placid repose with which guardian angels bless, and when they bless, smile upon, the hale and fortunate children of men. Oh, how interminable this season ! how unquali-

fed its gloom to the spirit that's sad and awake !  
listening to the measured strike of the clock, as  
it seems to toll an eternal death to all bliss—  
when the sighs of the wind meet an echo in the  
heart, and the very mouse running behind the  
wainscoting sends an apprehensive tremor through  
the disturbed and excited frame ! A child would  
here hide its little head beneath the sheltering  
bed-clothes, and the fatigue of fright would soon  
cause it to sleep. Though an hundred hideous  
dreams might haunt its pillow, yet happy, thrice  
happy, young child, art thou e'en in thy misery !  
A mother loves thee still, a father shall kiss the  
repentant sorrow on thy cheek, and thy night of  
care give place to a bright and cloudless morrow.

Not so the miser's. His is a repetition of the  
last—an earnest of the future—the same grind-  
ing, griping, suspicious, ever-cowardly demon,  
that attends him through the day, lurks near and  
torments him at night. With every tiny noise,  
or floating fancy, the wretched trembler whisper-  
ing fear, with chattering teeth, places his skeleton

hand on the cold iron that contains his hoarded riches, and finding it safe, bows o'er that rusty coffer, muttering out his soul in eulogiums upon the strength of its bolts, and the weight, the rich weight of his treasure. When he returns to his creaking couch, there, shrouded in musty rags and cobwebs, this sordid creature's rest is broken by the vision of a glistening knife, presented to his naked throat; or legions of robbers in consultation upon his gold, and sharing the precious metal—the very coin he used to count. His horror at such a sight is more than the rack could induce; he springs from his lair, and again returns in comparative confidence to meet no peace.

We might also view the gambler, whose aching ears still strain to catch the reckoning of another hour, which tells the day draws nearer when the world shall know his disgrace, and those he once called friends be no more found. Perhaps the first sheen of the sun will light upon his rigid

corpse—the self-impooverisher—self-destroyed—a ghastly spectacle—an awful warning !

What is the maiden's grief? What makes that gentle girl weep, and weeping, moan as though her life were failing? Not a parent's frown—a sister's sneer—a brother's broad contempt. Virtue esteems her very fair; in that transparent brow the goddess views herself. Can the desertion of worldly wealth sink her soul thus low? Ah! why suppose what never was? At this ill, which drives men to perdition, a woman smiles, and in poverty shines forth her mind—her brightest part! These tears then, if shed for the first, are far holier. The orphan babe's plaintive cry is yet mockery to what she feels, for an infant cannot consider its want. The father-bird mourns the loss of his lady and nestlings, another mate, another brood, soon urges him to forget. But night wears apace, the morrow comes, upon which, in obedience to her earthly relatives, a pale bride is to vow everlasting homage where she never loved, whilst the youth who has her whole heart,

is striving in the battle-field for glory therewith to endow his mistress ; and all now left this lonely *she*, is a breathless prayer that he may never know her agony !

Here let us pause, and reflect upon these portraits of human suffering, adduced from the great mass that are connected with and tributary to the passions of our nature. If we dwell long upon the distress of such individuals, the sympathies of sense will become affected, and a groan will issue from our pitying hearts. This is well, and natural, but let it be instantly followed by praise and thanksgiving to our Maker for all the comforts we enjoy, seeing how we have never deserved them ; and let us always be ready to submit to whatever his mighty justice inflicts, as from what we behold around we cannot, dare not hope to escape. In his great wisdom, a few he tries because he loves them, that they may be brought nearer to Him for that aid, and finally, for that rich reward the world cannot give ; while the slight offences of some he seriously rebukes, and

visits the open guilt of others with summary vengeance. Frequently he permits man's own follies to become his greatest curse.

Another train of thought emanates from the same source, namely, the circumstances before mentioned, in which our fellow creatures are supposed to have trouble. As this arises from different causes, so very opposite and in unequal portions are the degrees of satisfaction that each person in each case experiences, for seldom is there felt an ill that cannot be soothed at times, and often pain is the birth of great delight.

Thus, the child has forgiveness for past misdeeds to hail him on his path of rectitude; now the blight that punishment shed over him is dispelled, the youth's best resolutions spring with renewed elasticity, basking in the sunshine of his parents' pleased, encouraging looks, as they regard their child giving every promise of flourishing goodness. Despicable also, and utterly miserable as he appears, yet we perceive the miser's whole and sole happiness is wrapped up

in the gold that lines his coffers, and lest he lose one fraction of it, this being endures more corporeal and mental anguish than tongue can tell. Even the gambler has a dreary pleasure while contemplating the revenge he is about to take upon himself, besides a cherished though false anticipation of oblivion succeeding the deed. A wild hope now beams, now glimmers near the hapless maiden—'tis that a warrior may rescue her still, on the threshold, from fate's impending harm.

Of a more solemn, settled cast than any we have yet mused upon was the sadness that sank Mr. Leslie's spirit; his fondest anticipations were hid for ever in an endless cave of woe, from which clammy damps seemed to issue, tainting the whole air of Malvern. Her servants, engaged in mysterious whisperings, none knowing what the others said, and afraid to ask an explanation lest a louder tone might wake the crickets that had long been silent. The superiors and inferiors of the menial circle mingled in the kitchen.

Since the catastrophe that paralysed their energies, the sudden conviction of the absolute deaths of their mistress and beloved young lady, with terror for the consequences to their nervous master, old Nelly, and ultimately to themselves (as, being in the family many years, most of them had no other home) further, (seeing that it was not quite so bad as they had anticipated) each now remembered his and her conduct, and their master's rebuke, still present to their hearing, caused them to move about like thieves among broken bottles; so unsafe did they feel, and so worthy of chastisement. One and all appeared striving to make atonement by the watch they kept. None slumbered that night or thought of retiring to rest; if any had occasion to cross the apartment, they walked so lightly that the pressure of their feet might not raise a sleeping beetle, or the noise cause the wary cat to open her eyes. The fire was forgotten, and the lamps burned out. Through the unshuttered window the faint light of a lonely star, at times obscured by the hazy



clouds, that rolled sluggishly over it, gave an increased gloom to the scene by deepening the darkness that succeeded each fitful ray. If Mrs. Hipps appeared (the *own maid* as she was termed by the domestics) all united in one low murmuring inquiry of, "how was the mistress then?"

Mrs. Hipps's presence was mutually cheering, as the news she brought (though it only imported that she had not been called for, and "signs by madam could'nt want her") taught them to hope for better prospects; and poor Hipps "was glad enough," she said, "to hear somebody breathe besides herself," as she had been "sitting till her bones were stiff in the great arm chair in madam's dressing-room, duty binding her, upon such occasions, to be a sort of *garden* spirit over the ill and weak."

After the good dame had finished her usual repetition, with this favourite hint of the station she held in society, enhancing, as it was intended, the condescension of her address, to some underlings of the household, she invariably stirred the

cold ashes, shivered over them a moment, and again ascended from the lower regions with silent caution, and with what would have been great day-light dignity; but at that hour the grace of her bearing was lost to envying eyes.

Something more also than common fear made these inmates of the hall cower together. Mr. Power, the butler, and first *gentleman* of the party, had declared that just before the mischief happened, he saw a figure clothed in mourning, winding through the shrubbery, straight to the house, "quite bold and oudacious like, till it vanished all of a minit;" and Meteor, who was not far off, "never barked a bit," which showed 'twas no creature of the ground, as it left no scent; for such a wise dog could not easily be fooled or bamboozled by a two-legged being in human shape; but from what he had heard Mrs. O'Farrell say, he firmly believed it to be nothing more or less than a real Irish *banshee*—the first he had ever seen, and the last, he prayed, that would bring bad luck to Malvern."

This being the assertion of a man and a soldier, it was morally impossible to doubt the verity of the statement; besides he could show them, as positive proof, "the very pane of glass in his pantry," through which he beheld the apparition; and by the same token, the silver he had been polishing still lay upon the ground where he let it fall, when the first sound of a scream warned him of some damage to life that the dreadful thing had done. He had been engaged in many a bloody action, but never was scared before.

Leaving the kitchen circle with their natural and supernatural apprehensions, waiting anxiously for a long postponed day-light, let us visit a chamber in the same house, to see enacting an oft-rehearsed drama of life—sickness and sorrow; the one by short, the other by sure degrees bearing earth's loveliest and best children to her great family vault! Who is to be chief mourner here? A fair young creature whose fancy-formed prospects are arched by a rainbow bright as her youth, springing, she dreams, from the shower

that is passing away. Now it faints, again it glows, and now she is sure it is fixed evermore !

"How happy she seems !" sighed her father, as he dropped a tear upon those ruby lips, that trembled between a smile and a laugh ; she opened her eyes, and his daughter regarded him with a look of extreme affection. Still asleep, she closed them, and, rivetted to the spot as by a spell, her sire stood. So beautiful did she appear, so perfect, that, mute, he paused to catch a revelation from above. For a moment the ideal overwhelmed him ; repentant for the presumptuous thought, he moved slowly away. 'Twas well he did so, as something she had seen in her father's countenance changed the sky of Edith's dream ; gathering storms obscured her rainbow, and disturbed with direful apprehensions, she turned from side to side.

Believing his child still peacefully reposing, all his better meditations soothed, in a measure, by this reflection, Leslie knelt at his wife's couch—not to gaze upon her—he knew she was composed

—and for this was thankful; but felt that if he dared again behold that cheek (sacred to a heavenly Lord), his widowed breast, that now heaved audibly, would burst in troubled sobs, revealing his agony to her he wished most to support by his forbearance. Remembering her last request, as he pillowed that beloved one's head, when with pious fervour she twice repeated, "Forget not, dearest George, for an instant, that your duty is to bow humbly to the will of your Maker; you must not repine at this dispensation of his Providence; you would not could you understand half the joy I experience, and my certainty of a blessed immortality." He had shed one tear upon viewing his daughter's sleeping gaiety, which he knew must soon give place to pale sadness, and this, though a drop from the ocean of his grief, relieved him. Another weakness he vowed should not escape, so long as the barrier of human strength and of reason lasted; and faithfully and earnestly he prayed that a whole family might meet hereafter never to be

separated ! He beheld himself in regions of light and life with those he loved, and was comforted.

Bending at the altar of his great high priest, and for the time absent in soul from all below, for, bereft of earthly hope, the hushed calmness of Leslie's prayer gradually woke into fervent breathings, till, full and clear, most solemn sounds broke Edith's troubled rest. She woke—looked wildly round—her father knelt before her. She was still—she felt—she heard—with one white finger pressed to her lip she listened ; soon her hands were clasped together, her face uplifted, sire and child were united in heaven ! The majestic reverence of that daughter's attitude, with the traces of recent excitement yet burning in her cheeks and sparkling from her eyes—her long flowing locks reflecting their golden glory upon the pure neck that was scarcely of a different hue from the stainless robe she wore—contrasted pathetically with the wanness of her father's countenance and his manly figure together, formed a group sublimely interesting.

Struggling through the round holes of the night-shade placed upon the floor, the brindled light of a rush candle gave an indescribable air of mystery to the scene, as it discovered only the prominent objects, throwing the back-ground into the deepest shadow, and investing every high piece of furniture with a canopy of gloom. Its beams coming on Edith's features caught superior brightness from the softness, and there enchanted seemed to rest, increasing the beauty of the picture to the loftiest pitch of imagery.

"How is mamma?" whispered Edith anxiously, as Mr. Leslie first perceived she had been an eye-witness of his devotion, and had joined in his aspirations.

"My dear little girl," he began, with parental fondness approaching her, "I would have you go to sleep, and leave that question to be answered to-morrow. I have disobeyed Dr. Pomfret's orders, in permitting your bed to be placed in mamma's room, upon condition that you would not say a syllable till the morning; you have

broken your promise, and if this should make you worse, Dr. Pomfret will blame poor papa, who has enough to grieve him, without his little darling's indisposition."

"But, dearest papa, I could not sleep now if I tried. I was dreaming dreams, when, all of a sudden, I saw you dressed in black from head to foot, and looking so thin!"

"You are dreaming still, my love!" he replied, with a melancholy smile.

"No, papa, I am broad awake—how is she?" Edith again whispered, pointing to where her mother lay.

"Very calm, my dear, but Dr. Pomfret did not give me his opinion last night; I fear"—and his voice faltered—"I anticipate what he would not tell me."

"Oh! my own papa, you must not think of such a thing?" said Edith, comprehending what he meant, and so shocked at the conception that she could not bear her father or herself to harbour it. "I am sure mamma will soon be well; she



was walking and speaking with me in my dreams, and looking more lovely than ever."

"In paradise, my child! never again here."

"Yes! here, papa," returned Edith emphatically, and almost in tears. She continued: "Her illness—mamma's illness—was wholly and solely occasioned by fright. I will explain to you."

Mr. Leslie bent his ear close to her mouth, lest he should lose a word, and listened in profound astonishment; but as she proceeded to comment upon the unearthly sound of the voice that spoke the fatal words, he became incredulous, and having a confused remembrance of long shadows haunting his tedious hours that same evening, was the more solicitous to remove any impression of supernatural agency that his child might have.

He chided her upon her silly fears, and Edith was well satisfied to be thus rebuked; as, refreshed by repose, and pleased with the brilliant prospects it had conjured to her view, she, with

the pertinacity of youth, already began to forget her unpleasant sensation, and to place next her memory only her happiest thoughts. When her father remarked that she was like him in being carried away by the freaks of her imagination, and warned her to endeavour to curb early what had been a great plague to him through life, she kissed his hand, promising to obey, if possible.

"And now, lie still, my sweet one!" he concluded, "I will take Meteor, and prove to myself and you, by his sagacity, that it was some beggar, whose hoarse petitioning wrought so powerfully upon your mother's weak nerves, and frightened you out of your little wits."

The tone in which Mr. Leslie said this was a mock-guise to the pain that oppressed him, and would have been detected by any one but his daughter, who at that moment was thinking that when her papa was gone, she would have a near peep at her darling mamma.

Leslie quitted the room, repeating to himself:  
"No! my beloved is not long for this world; I

must not, I will not, blind myself with the vain hope. I now see she has long been fading in my arms, and the croaking of some ruthless vagabond has hastened the infliction of a stroke for years impending. May I bear it as I ought! Oh! my child, may'st thou not be crushed, but learn to know that, beckoning us to follow, thy mother leads the way, through many a difficult pass, safe to eternity!"

No sooner had her father departed than Edith, stepping from her couch, walked softly to her mother's.

Leaving a warm caress on her fair forehead, and having arranged the bed clothes with every attention to comfort, and with care lest she should, while so doing, wake her dear parent, she went on tiptoe to the dressing-room, where Hippa was stationed, to learn from her when morning might be expected, and to extort a promise from the good dame, that she would not tell her papa of these midnight wanderings, assuring her at the same time that she was not going to sleep again

till the morrow's night, and that if Hipps felt the need of a nap she might take one, and be quite easy in her mind. Thus, having satisfied herself upon all points, Edith again lay down, to wait impatiently the result of her papa's out-door search.

Mr. Leslie would not hear of Power's accompanying him, for his butler was much troubled with the asthma. However, he was assured by him that no beggar whatever had been near the hall that night, for Power, verily believing what he had seen to be a ghost, took care not to mention the circumstance lest he should be discredited, and thus his pride be materially injured; and as Mr. Leslie was too much displeased with the other servants to command their presence, or put any questions whatever to them, concerning the supposed nocturnal visitor, he went out attended only by Meteor; but much rain having fallen through the night, and it being now many hours since the catastrophe, it was impossible that a scent could lie. The dog, when desired, placed his nose to

the ground, and lifted it almost immediately to his master's face, as if to tell him that his pursuit was fruitless. However, this did not discourage Leslie, who proceeded to traverse the avenue leading to the bower.

Suddenly Meteor stopped, seemingly much occupied with something on the earth. Mr. Leslie stooping perceived the mark of a human foot, every toe deeply impressed on the moist gravel. "This," he exclaimed, "is a sure clue to the mystery which has hitherto involved the night."

While speaking he saw several more of the same size and shape; before he raised his head Meteor uttered a bark of recognition and bounded onwards, without paying any further attention to the prints on the earth.

"What can this mean?" thought Leslie. However, he determined upon following the animal without further hesitation.

At some distance he observed Meteor enter the harbour, and as the dog remained there, his

conjectures were puzzled more and more. He did not think a prowling vagrant would stay to be captured. He knew of people having lured the most intelligent dogs to forget their duty. Many were his doubts and misgivings before he reached the place. The first thing he saw was a figure stretched upon the floor, in the same spot where his wife had lain fainting. Its hand was stroking Meteor's head, and the dog was standing, evidently grateful for the pats bestowed upon him.

"What dost thou here?" cried Leslie.

"I'll away, I'll away," was the answer, and a man getting on his hands and knees began crawling to the door.

"Can't you walk like another creature?" said Leslie, holding the lantern to his face. "What, no! Owenee?"

The half-witted being, recognising his master, started into an upright position the instant he reached the threshold, and with both hands supporting one of his feet, which, bringing into

Leslie's view, he showed was naked, with the exception of where it had been smeared with mud, and exclaimed: "Would you have myself, your honour, dirty the pretty moss of that blessed place with the ugly mumber that was reared from the ground, and belongs to the same mother, but never should soil her beautiful childer; and it is to be sure you would not," he continued, answering for himself, and placing the foot on its parent's lap, where it seemed to rest in perfect confidence.

"But come, Owenee, what brings you here at this hour?" said his master.

"Why, then, please yer honour, it is ever since the mistress (an bless her!) fell in a fit, that myself has been a sleepin' away the fright; but in troth, ye need not be mighty angry, for the cows is all safe in the near field, and the calves in the pen, as snug as before they were born; but with yer honour's lave, I'll away to the cratur's."

He was proceeding accordingly to the scene of his service, when a melancholy recollection seemed

to strike him, and with a plaintive expression of contemplation he turned to Meteor, addressing himself to his master, "and it is a fine baste, and larned. Would not your honour's honour give the same to be with poor Owenee, that since the death of Trundle has been all alone by himself, and nobody to care for a bit of his supper when he has too much."

"You shall have another dog, but I cannot part with this," said Leslie.

"I don't care for the carcase, 'tis *Love* I want—and this darlint loves me. I could *boord* and lodge him like a man, or a bullock fatted for the killing!" as if the last arrangement must persuade Leslie to yield the dog to a master thus fond and generous.

"You must ask your young mistress, Owenee, for the dog; and if she consent I shall have no objection," answered Leslie, knowing the effect this would produce upon the honest cow-herd.

"If Miss Edith took a fancy to the baste, and he was mine, she should have him before she



wished for him. To the end of my days," continued Owenee, "I'd repint if I had taken the crater from her; I, who would like nothing better than to find a mine o' goold that she might have all the whole of it, and then poor Owenee would be more than rich if he' got one smile from her purty lips intirely to himself."

Here Leslie promised that Edith should select, and herself present a dog to Owenee, that he might be consoled by receiving something from her. With this, the good creature was delighted, and skipped, and frolicked like a maniac till out of sight, and Leslie heard him singing wildly and merrily, each sound growing fainter as the distance increased between them.

The next day brought Dr. Pomfret, and with the M. D. surgeon and apothecary of the hamlet of — came a packet of medicines; for the enlightened doctor, aware how the case would proceed, knew to the eighth of a grain (taking into consideration every change of pulse) how much his patient might require.

Besides, it was easier to place upon the bill what had really entered the house, and nothing could be more practicable than to alter the prescriptions at will, as necessity might require that a difference in the treatment should be made.

This morning the practitioner, after a satisfactory long consultation with himself in his patient's room, bade Hipps seek her master, who, being found and produced, Dr. Pomfret requested him to step into the library, and cautiously closing the door, declared his patient to be in a precarious state; told her husband that every attention should be paid to her, and all the skill of medicine exerted (on his part) at the same time—that he would be more satisfied if another medical man were united with him in his labours. His request was immediately attended to; a London physician of much celebrity only remaining an hour at the hall; and waiving ceremony, circumlocution, and offers of hospitality upon this occasion, as he must return to his practice, (some urgent cases requiring his momentary

attention) coincided in all Dr. Pomfret's measures, and gave it as his opinion that Mrs. Leslie's illness was a deep-seated affection of the lunatic mind and that there was nothing to hope for her; that she might seem to rally sometimes, would linger long while, but that the disease must terminate fatally, and probably at the time unexpectedly.

Leslie heard pronounced this doom of earthly bliss, with all the fortitude of a spirit much broken to fear the blow; but, awed by the serenity of her feelings, he could not declare the whole truth to his child, trusting that the course of things might unfold it more gently.

Hugh Bourne, the always welcome and the most constant visitor at Malvern, was a clergyman of the Church of England; but entertained none of those prejudices which were so conspicuous, and too often odious, in her minister who, decrying the intolerance and bigotry of some other persuasions, with pharisaic pride, treated with open contempt and deadly hate, and persecuted all communities of dissenters—those not

least offensive, who come nearest our own tenets. And what are these who by such means and such means only obtain the name of high churchmen? Are they immaculate? Some are the younger sons of nobility or affluence, who, proposed to a living because in the gift of the family, are accordingly sent to college, there to be initiated in all the obscenity of classic lore, and the deepest hell of vice that human life, or rather human infancy presents. Thus the constitution is undermined by imbibing poison, which the few ethical antidotes commonly used can never thoroughly eradicate. When the boy becomes a premature man in all things but reflection, he is given the charge of immortal souls—an awfully responsible one to contemplate seriously. He ascends the pulpit to preach to his fellow sinners, virtues of which *he* has a vague idea who has casually heard, but never been taught to practise one; while his auditors, attentive at first perhaps, mistaking theory for practice, or half-persuaded by syllogistical reasoning to believe him every-

thing that is perfect, so soon as they perceive the character of their erroneously termed "*spiritual guide*," whose father's hounds are kennelled in his heart, his father's horses foddered there, his leisure moments, of which he devises many, are employed in pursuing sports ill-suited and lamentably discreditable to his solemn office; he forfeits the respect of his parishioners, though he may become a boon-companion of their follies, thus condemning himself, and leading the weak-minded, and tutored by their evil propensities faster to destruction; for men are alike influenced by nature and the copy-book phrase of their early youth, that "example is better than precept." The most eloquent sermon of such an one may give those who hear him just ideas of his mis-spent talents, but can never recal their souls.

Other high-church advocates, and perhaps more notorious than the former, who are sometimes too much occupied with sensual gratifications to pay attention to any one's business, (much less

their own) are individuals who take up the profession merely for the sake of the respectability it gives, and the introduction to certain circles in society which they could not obtain through any aristocracy or merit of their own, without one Christian grace ; and vain of their position, their object is, by depressing and condemning those of other denominations, to elevate their church, and insidiously (but more especially) themselves ; of whom, as symbolical, they talk much in *the temple*, and at a time consecrated to far more serious discourse. They do no good in the community to which they belong, and a great deal of mischief to the church they profess to support. These seek applause for all their actions, thinking praiseworthy what their duty commands, and shamelessly, openly declare to be too small the stipend that bribes many to accept the office, and is granted to others upon their accession to notice.

The latter complaint is known as the consequence, and occurs when men morally and

physically disqualified, are endowed with a trust which it is impossible can too honourably be fulfilled ; but which (melancholy to repeat,) is frequently disgraced by the circumstances, not the virtues of the parties, being considered a sufficient recommendation.

That there are many excellent, many valuable men in the Church of England, the whole Christian world must agree ; but that there are many reprobate characters, is also certain.

Would that the wealth of the idle, the lazy, the discontented were taken from them, that they might return discomfited to the giddy herd, and that the holy, humble, untiring spirits and worthy pupils of their noble apostolic masters were rewarded here as well as hereafter.

Hugh Bourne was a distant and needy relation of Mrs. Leslie's mother, by whom his merits were rightly appreciated, and through whose beneficence he received a small living ; but which gave him wide scope for the exercise of those talents with which he was richly endowed. His

let were buoyed up with the blessings of his numerous flock, and an enemy he had not.

While reading the service, he wept over the grave of his patroness, and not long afterwards was bereaved by death of an amiable wife. Now, desolate and a widower, he clung the fonder to the child Edith Dermod. By him she was taught the value of her soul, and intrusting it to the keeping of her Maker, to dread no earthly calamity.

Her father was killed in a battle ; she became an orphan, and bore her loss of family and home with fortitude ; while this good shepherd joyed over his little fair lamb, with all the joy of a spiritual father satisfied.

When she was wooed and won by Leslie, he blessed them both at the altar, and her husband, in admiration of the man, bestowed upon him a benefice in his own gift, and close to the estate of Malvern, of considerable emolument, which furnished Mr. Bourne with the means of doing more good ; for his benevolence, ever seeking the



opportunity, he could not hoard a mite. Also, he fulfilled the gospel law of charity in its many other parts; thus, he was a true christian, and a perfect clergyman. His pious industry and modesty won for him the affection of the high and the low. No poor man refused him his tithes, but by the always ready and cheerful performance of their duty showed the veneration in which they held him. Even dissenters from the tenets of his church were glad to have this opportunity of acknowledging their respect for his character, and often came to his church, to receive the blessing that followed words of salutary warning, of comfort and grace from his lips. If he dined or supped from home, which was not unfrequent, with the rich parishioners, he never went for the sake of mere animal enjoyment, but that he might not lose an occasion of making himself useful to their souls.

No power in nature could prevail upon him to join in amusements which he thought unbecoming the sobriety of his garb, and the peculiarly

distinct rank he held in society. For he believed, in giving himself to his God, that the Supreme Being required from him a willing sacrifice of all earthly vanities, to the great end for which he was especially placed in the world.

He was often solicited to receive pupils whom he might educate for the ministry, but this he declined ; first, saying, he could not bring up a child to the same profession, whose mind was not already imbued with proper zeal, so as to insure his execution of the ultimate trust with right principles. He thought that the boy, in this case, and not the parents ought to be first consulted. He could not bear, he also added, that a man's character, for whom he had any regard, should be formed upon the theoretical virtues and vivid vices of pagans ; and with the instability such precepts give, be cast, like a rotten ship, upon the quicksands of a college, where it can hardly escape destruction.

He had passed through the ordeal—he would not say unscathed ; at the time he thought that

right which older and wiser men had done before him; but the most powerful reason he gave for not accepting numerous offers of this kind was, that he could not take thus necessarily many hours of his time from his needy flock; he could not feel justified in the sight of his Maker if he should so neglect his charge, as every digression from the straight path of his duty must be accounted as lost hereafter.

Such was the man with whom Mrs. Leslie spent many hours of heavenly converse—now her greatest enjoyment. And day after day Edith sat near the curtain of her parent's couch, that she might hide her face from view, when their soft speaking of eternity forced tears from her eyes; and through an opening in the drapery (unseen by him or her mother) she sought wistfully and often for encouragement in some one of the features of the clergyman; but the palor of his furrowed cheek, and mild but dim blue eyes, with the sorrowful expression upon his lips, while his shadowy hands held a large dark-lettered book,

with a black cover and loose silver clasps, revealing his mission, always struck (while she thus speculated) the most painful sense of what death might be to her young heart, but which thought she could never quite let harbour there.

Mrs. Leslie was sometimes well enough to recline on the sofa in her drawing-room; whenever such was the case, Edith's happiness was excessive. She would watch for Mr. Bourne, and as she saw him coming up the lawn, would run to meet him, and with joy beaming in every feature, exclaim, "that her dear mamma was better." The light of her countenance would spread itself over the old man's face, which made Edith love him dearly; but then it would subside to a more serious cast than before, and she felt she could not, dare not, ask him "why?" but would walk on speechless and sad. The pleasure of his first look was really caught from the exhibition of the child's delight; but then again (as if to rebuke himself and her for entertaining the hope it expressed, and grieved that she should think thus)

his whole manner changed to the most grave and forbidding.

A week came, and months passed away, without any very material alteration for the worse or better appearing in Mrs. Leslie's health. At length a morning arrived—it was a bright one in February. The red warmth of an early sun broke lucidly and full into the apartment, as if chased by the white frost that for a while triumphed over all without. The whole glory of the day-king was resplendent at the foot of her couch, when Mrs. Leslie awoke. She gazed upon the brightness and smiled !

Edith hung over her, and asked, “How she felt ?” Her mother moved her lips, but spoke not ; she looked towards the door, and Mr. Leslie entered the chamber.

Still silent, she motioned him to approach ; he stood erect beside his daughter. All was calm—all quiet—intensely solemn was the silence. The wife sat up—she took her husband's hand—placed it in his child's, and folded them both in

one of her own. With the other she parted the hair, then rested awhile, as if invoking a blessing upon the youthful brow of Edith ; then, raising her arm and eyes to heaven, to which the forefinger pointed, she murmured her Maker's name evidently for their direction and support, and immediately fell back, her eyes still open and earnest upwards.

Her spirit had fled, but from the animated expression that dwelt on her countenance, those to whom she was dear were unconscious of the fact, till her hands, setting in death, clasped them closer together.

## CHAPTER VII.

If I had thought thou couldst have died,  
I might not weep for thee ;  
But I forgot, when by thy side,  
That thou couldst mortal be :  
It never through mind had pass'd,  
The time would e'er be o'er,  
And I on thee should look my last,  
And thou shouldst smile no more !

C. WOLFE.

The intensity of Leslie's anguish was subdued by a long previous contemplation of his bereavement. One remaining tie—a daughter—bound the widowed man to earth. Leslie had once lamented a mother and many friends, though this was the greatest affliction he had experienced,

in which a fond husband alone can sympathize. Having served long apprenticeship to labour, he had grown inured to the severity of its trials; but his child, young and delicate, was not crushed by the stroke. She had not yet learned to know a nearer or a dearer friend, and one given in with her whole existence. With the unalloyed ardour and hope of youth, she imagined a relation so beloved by her, could, should, ought, never to die. When the parent looked beautiful her child hailed her nearer health than ever, little imagining the pencil of death might thus fair.

Now the dreary reality fell upon her heart with all that paralysed reason. Her father, 'tis said, was left to her, but at such a moment she might not, she felt not but her loss. The world seemed gone from Edith when her father died! and hugged to the lifeless form of her last love, she lay upon the couch in the power of death, heedless of her father's oft-repeated mournful request, "to be to him what



she would be rewarded for hereafter—a dutiful daughter, by obeying his wishes in leaving the sad scene, and seeking refreshment on her knees, where she would receive that sustaining aid she much needed.

Edith heard neither old Nelly's soft tread as she entered the apartment, nor her affectionately impressive voice, repeating; "my child, my only darling, will you listen for two short moments to what an old woman can tell, who has seen sorrow and known sighing ever since she was a young girl, and before which she spelled into words, grievous letter after letter, till line after line came, all making up a long lesson she could now read without spectacles, or so much as drop a tear upon the page of the past." Or, "listen a bit," Nelly continued, "listen a bit, cushla machree, and believe that she who blessed the world and myself with thee, my baby once—now my only mistress—that she, thy mother, looks pure and bright as new-born snow in the sunshine. To wish her nearer thee is, to say the least of it,

sinful. Would you thaw the snow to make mud again of your parent?"

"This whole sentence, swelling towards the close, the last question loud and reproachful, came like a shock to Edith's numbed senses. "No, no, Nelly," she exclaimed, yet grasping together the dear clay.

No argument of Nelly's could now prevail, no taunt again rouse her, and the old woman sat upon the same couch and sobbed.

At length it was necessary that the child should be taken to her own room, as the last rites must be performed to the parent's remains. When her father raised Edith in his arms to convey her thence, though it had been agony to behold, it was almost death to be removed from her mother's cold corpse. She became insensible, and so long did she remain in this state, that all was over which might wake her to circumstances that must tend to increase her misery ere she fully recovered.

The deep toll of the church bell had sounded,

and was now silent, waiting in awful pensiveness to announce the next—another departure for the world of spirits.

The Rev. Hugh Bourne had, standing over the yawning chasm, with his bald head uncovered, and the tears rolling down his cheeks, completed the melancholy task of uniting to her parent earth what he had once given to her husband.

A plain marble slab, engraved with the name of Edith Leslie, now told the resting-place of the young girl's mother.

The house of mourning is never so sad as when compared with the house of feasting and merriment; but if thus connected, though merely in thought, the lesson the first teaches us becomes more impressive; the latter evidences our gratitude for manifold blessings, by duly enjoying them. The house of mourning, like the moral upon a tale, indicates that mirth, however joyous, cannot last for ever. The laugh and the song must one day give place to tearful sorrow and lamentations.

Upon each occasion of mourning, some one great precept knocks at the door of our minds, to which if we yield attention and admission, it there finds a wide sphere to revolve in. Is a child the grieved-for? Reflection discovers that youth is not insured against the power of the grave. Was the departed a mortal whose years had numbered more than threescore? This whispers that our young days are fleeting. Has a relation or dear friend gone before? We learn that the nearest and most esteemed in this world, if not for an eternal *ever*, at least for a season, must be separated from us. Would that the pang it cost were always wholesome, when death bears a loved one to the tomb, giving a warning that might cause us to make ready! Then indeed, as placidly resigned to our fate, we might look without dread of surprise at his distant or near, but sure return; nor need we quail beneath his livid eye, unmistakably fixed upon ourselves—his victims, from age or infirmity.

Among the unprepared to face this ruthless

tyrant are individuals who spend their lives in a giddy round of dissipation, barely satisfied when crammed into the short period of one night is the medley of dinner, opera and ball; after which comes the luxurious supper, and downy couch, upon which often the restless being tosses, reckless of repose; ennuyèd by the sobriety of the hour, or with weary eyelid, shuts out the day, and in fevered dreams anticipates the shades of another night which shall rival the past in revelry.

Should disease take unawares the gay sleeper, and defying every exertion to put it aside, hold down with painful shackles his enervated frame, first the bed seems stuffed with thorns, and every wrinkle of the sheet another obstacle to recovery. When the invalid's mind becomes exhausted of resources whence to vent its impatience of restraint, the acrimony his potion of sickness distils is liberally poured upon the attendants, and ministers of necessary but disagreeable restoratives.

Should death arrive, (thus ever too soon) rational retrospection gives no hope against severe chastisement hereafter, for, surrounded by and seeking folly, temptations are numerous, and must inevitably deteriorate from the soul's best interest.

But can we expect reason from a being who seemed only to exist in a region of excitement and falsity? No, such an one, (though far from liking this interruption to his amusements) blindly and rashly, 'as presumptuously believes, that if in his course through life he has not materially injured a neighbour, or probably has not thought ill, or spoken evil wilfully of a fellow creature; in fact done, what is commonly called, "no harm," as a matter of no doubt—a thing of course—he conceives that happiness awaits him in eternity, without his having had a serious sentiment connected with the Great Ruler there, till this last moment. His moral sins may have been peccadilloes when estimated by those of other people, and the good he has done also, by comparison,

may appear greater; but if he has neglected setting apart a portion of his days for the education of himself in heavenly things, besides the meagre periods formal religion demands, his expectations must meet hereafter with an awful revulsion.

There are many who, if crime or a dishonourable action has stained their career, desperately catch at mercy, forgetting that grim justice holds the black cap not far above their doomed heads. Some are not allowed space for even these most wretched self-consolations, in the dreadful leisure of a dying hour. Intoxicated, thoughtless, extravagant of time, they have whirled on till arrested suddenly, they fall precipitately.

But oh! how different is the exit of a successful candidate for eternal life! When the slight regret of human nature in parting with affectionate friends—when the last struggle is over—then, how beautiful is the entrance of the redeemed into glory! borne on wings of dazling

light, there to view and participate in ever-changing scenes of never-ending bliss !

When Edith fully recovered her sensibility, that moment most dreaded by her friends was one of unexpressible comfort to the nurse, who had not left her bed-side since she had been taken to a sick room ; and to the father, who drooped over his child with feelings well-nigh too oppressive to bear. She woke as from a slumber, and greeted them gratefully and warmly, expressing at the same time her contrition for the uneasiness and trouble she was evidently conscious she had occasioned. A great revolution seemed to have been wrought during this apparent suspension of reason. Perfectly sensible of the affliction which had so recently befallen her, she was calmly resigned to what she now felt was her Maker's will. Not a murmur escaped her lips, not a tear her eyes, whose long lashes hung heavily, and motionless, as in melancholy thought, on her pale cheeks, causing the dark orbs they guarded to look deeper and more pensive still.



Nelly watched with solicitude every change of her darling's countenance, to read the inmost workings of her soul; and whenever she fancied that palest cheek grew paler, a tale of the village, connected with poverty or suffering, (in which she would contrive an excusing necessity for consulting her young mistress) was one of the expedients she had recourse to, with the view of diverting Edith from the ruling subject of her meditations, and lest her mind, once roused, should relapse into its original and hurtful indolence. Nelly, never at a loss for matter of conversation, kept up a constant excitement, which led Edith, sometimes tired of ease, and anxious to revert to her misery, to endeavour to gloom Nelly's discourse by alluding to the badness of the weather, or to some disappointment the old woman had met with, in the character of a grown-up person or child, from whose promise she had predicted great and good things.

But this *ruse* was unavailing. Nelly apprehended her motive, and gathered courage from

what she esteemed a proof of her child's recovering energy. The rain reminded Nelly that "the farmers had been praying for *that same* this many a day, and would be *main* glad to see it." With regard to the losses she experienced, in many speculations upon the improveable and redeemable dispositions of some in whom she had taken an interest, Nelly was well aware that of all topics, such (because wounding to her feelings) would have been far from her darling's selection, if in health and spirits.

She therefore felt not the least pique, but proceeded immediately to recal to Edith's memory the many cases in which she had been fortunate, and to recount at length, the "*proof positive hopes*" she had of others. Nelly was rejoiced when the time came for her dear lady to visit once more the sitting-room, as from that period she was sure she might begin to reckon upon Edith's perfect recovery; in which Hipps joined, saying that "people were never *constructed convalescent* till they were up and about; and

naturally the first thing they should do before they braved the winds out of doors, was to try their strength, fair and easy, on a *Brussels* carpet, in a *well-ventilated* room ; at the same time, the door and windows should be air-tight, for draughts were the ruination of a delicate and unused-to constitution."

Nelly, with anxious care and fondness, wrapped shawls and cloaks closely round the slight figure of her nursling, upon her first descent from her chamber ; and upon this occasion, for she had her reasons, the old woman, ill able to support herself, was, at her own request, the only attendant her lady had. Nelly sustaining this darling's languid steps, beguiled the tedious distance with portraying in imagetic words the pleasure it would give her papa to surprise him at breakfast. Progressing thus slowly we shall leave them, and proceed instantly to view their destination.

Upon the table was evident a preparation for the morning repast. The tea things comprised a slop bowl, sugar basin, but one tea cup, and a

solitary saucer. The lid of a massy old-fashioned silver tea-pot lay open and ready for the reception of its proper element. Close beside it, on the right, was the tea-caddy, with a spoon thrust handily into the staple commodity of the Chinese, black and green forming a goodly mixture; where the urn was to be, rose a large and curiously embossed worsted rug; the plates, knives, forks, cold ham, and hot rolls and butter were as usual. Everything appeared regulated as by the studious care of a servant long in that family, and knowing better than they did themselves the habits of each member. But to this was added a certain order in the arrangement, which showed that the necessities and feelings were attended to by him; that thus his master might not feel the want of the one who for years had sat at the head of his table, and fulfilled its pleasant offices.

Power appointed that instinct alone would teach Mr. Leslie how to act; he had contemplated making the tea himself, and bringing it in, in the

*théière* commonly used when any of the family breakfasted alone; but this, he thought, might remind his master that he was now, as he termed it, "a bachelor against his will;" besides, "he might miss the urn, which was formerly set on the table just in the middle between himself and the missus." Power thought it ought to occupy the same place, as "unless the master tried on purpose to look for her, he might think she was still behind the urn; but the spout must be turned towards him for convenience sake." Other inducements for putting it there were, "that the noise might cheer him, and making the tea would give him something to do."

Before the appearance of this organ of use, which had cost Power so much reflection, Mr. Leslie sat musingly opposite what Nelly called "a roaring fire," and which she had herself "*ordained*;" telling the kitchen maid to place wood with the coals, "as the room must be well-aired against the time it was to be occupied by her young mistress." This order was religiously

observed, and the faggots, crackling, shot sparks that gave birth to fresh flames; the fire seemed the only living, because noisy thing, in the apartment.

Mr. Leslie for a considerable time regarded earnestly the glowing furnace. At length he smiled. It was the first faint animation his countenance had shown for a whole hour that morning, and the first pleasurable expression it had exhibited for many long days; but so unaccountable was that smile, that a witness would have been almost tempted to stoop down, and look more ardently than he did into the fire, to discover some of those grim, comic forms in the red heat that often excites the mirth of an observer.

Here Power entered almost noiselessly, and placing the hissing urn at its post, withdrew with equal silence to the door; when, facing round with a sharp-shot military air, and pausing till he had attracted his master's attention by the word "Sir," commandingly spoken, (taking a hint from the effect the discharge of a galvanic battery

produces) he proceeded, pronouncing with an emphasis in loud and rapid rotation, each syllable of, "I am bound to tell that breakfast is ready," and immediately disappeared—satisfied that Mr. Leslie would not this morning "let the water grow cold and uncomfortable, before he set the tea a-drawing."

For a second Mr. Leslie's reverie was interrupted; he heard the voice—turned his head—saw a retreating coat-tail—and the corner of a white apron; he knew the rest—with a glance sketched the board—with his hand broke an egg—and without commencing its demolition reverted to a blaze that, spiring, rose half up the chimney, detaching in its climb large masses of soot, that fell, gilding the dark craters of many a volcano below. The fiery heads of men might have grown to giant proportions, or like noses of well-portrayed faces have dropped off, and chasmatic mouths been formed; the features of some might have been multiplied—and those of others mutilated; but none of these strange creations

and stranger changes occupied the attention of Mr. Leslie.

The subject of his meditations was of a more absorbing, more interesting character. He thought of the most valued wealth he possessed in this world—his child—and was comparatively happy. He remembered she was to be with him in that very room, that very day, and longed for twelve o'clock—the appointed hour.

Tones, lovely, soft and loud, would then charm the stillness and dissipate the loneliness of the apartment.

A reflection upon one subject often leads to another, and a concatenation is formed. Thus it was with Mr. Leslie. While smiling, his observation fell upon the ominous colour of his raiment, and a frown succeeded—not of anger—it was that peculiar knitting of the brows which tells that a liquid pain has risen from the heart to the eyes, and, but for an external muscular contraction, obedient to reason, instantly acting, would course



down the cheeks—the precursor of countless emulators.

Those furrowed clouds were soon dispelled, and his forehead lay trackless and white. Leslie once more contemplatively enjoyed the green spot in his desert, with that nicety of feeling affliction produced. He looked carefully over the apartment to see if there was anything in its arrangement that might remind Edith of her loss; but to this his servant appeared to have been attentive. The additional curtains that shaded the windows during her illness (Mrs. Leslie's sight having been extremely weak) had been removed, and the sunbeams wantoned in the apartment; the chairs and the tables he now perceived for the first time were also differently situated; his last thought was the sofa, which Edith would probably rest upon. There it stretched its languid length; but that spot, sacred to another's memory, had not been profaned by a single touch. The hand which had altered all the rest could not approach here. It was a hard task for Leslie to obliterate

traces, the memory of which made the blood rush wildly through his veins, agonizing his whole frame; but determined at once he rose. The impress of his beloved's head was still on the broad cushions. A scarlet cashmere shawl, well known as her's, was lying across the back, where he at her request had placed it the night before the fatal morrow.

"This too must be altered," he said. A book caught his attention; it was the *Memoirs of the Rev. Charles Wolfe*, then not long published, and a remarkable favourite of Mrs. Leslie's; its subject being a countryman of her own, whose piety, deep sentiment, energy of action, and liveliness of feeling, harmonized well with a temperament like her's. A pencil held it open, and recently marked was a small portion of one page. He eagerly read the following lines:—

"I'd ask no friends to mourn,  
When I to dust return,—

No breath of sigh,  
Or brine of eye,  
Should gather round my urn.

I just would ask a tear,  
From every *heart* that's there ;  
Then a smile each day,  
All sweetly gay,  
My memory should repair."

While thus engaged, the door opened, and Edith, letting go Nelly's hand, stood for a moment motionless.

She made an effort, unassisted, to advance, and staggering fell into her father's arms. Long and tenderly he pressed her to his breast; he felt that message, the volume he just relinquished conveyed, was balmy—given and registered it on his daughter's lips. He conducted her to the sofa, and wrapped the red shawl round her feet; he had forgotten his former intention, and Edith remembered nothing but the pleasure of her father's countenance. Another cup was soon produced, and a wide proud grin from Power welcomed his mistress. Mr. Leslie never made

tea so satisfactorily, and scarcely ever ate a meal with more relish.

Edith appeared grown since her indisposition, which idea was encouraged by the delicacy of her complexion and hair, that no longer flowed luxuriantly on her shoulders, but was banded, discovering the whole of her faultless features and taper-arching neck.

Her slender form, reclining with native ease and grace, on the soft, rich, almost breathing azure of the sofa, unlike a thing belonging to this dull lower world, seemed the angel of poetry pillowed on creation's clouds.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Like the young willow most easily bent,  
 She drooped a while ;  
 But mark ! it rises again to flourish.  
 When did the old oak tree, bowed in a storm,  
 Recover its upright energy ?

Mr. Leslie's relatives accompanied the usual condolences with pressing invitations to spend, under their several roofs, whatever period and measure of duration might be agreeable to himself or his daughter.

Acknowledging the kindness of these friends, the widower invariably refused their proffers. He clung to the spot of his loss with an agonizing fondness, which arose from every thing he saw,

pering that an object most dear to him had brightened them with her presence.

Edith in some degree recovered her health, but the hitherto lambent spirits had lost their elasticity, her joyous laugh no longer echoed in the hall; unlike its mistress, most like its spirit, she glided through the silent chambers of Malvern.

Though grief bound him for the remainder of his mortal career to one dark corner on earth, Mr. Leslie became anxious when a year elapsed that Edith (who had nearly attained the age of seventeen) should see something of life, and be introduced to her relations; for, from the ill health of her mother, and the necessary retirement of both parents, she had been rarely from home, and that little was in her childhood, and accompanied by them.

But Edith, shrinking from observation—too timid to venture alone upon the confines, as she imagined, of a great, new, and terrible world—begged, entreated, and at length extorted a promise

from her father, that he would never again mention the subject of leaving him, for even a day. The tranquillity of Edith's mind, after obtaining the promise just alluded to, was not of long continuance. Doubts, hopes, fears, an host of expectations, invaded its territory, with a letter that came one morning from Lady Hester de Winter, (an aunt of Mr. Leslie's) which read as follows:—

“My dear nephew,

“I was yesterday frightened nearly beyond recovery by receiving a billet with “pressing haste,” in large characters on the envelope, from Miss Mark, of Cheltenham, at whose establishment for young ladies I had placed my daughter Mary. Naturally my first impression was, that the girl had eloped with some penniless and designing man; my next, that she was dead; but lastly, when I opened the letter, conceive my horror at learning that typhus fever had broken out with great violence in the adjoining house; and dreading infection, Miss Mark had taken the precaution of removing each individual under her

charge to ——'s hotel, the only place where an immediate asylum could be procured.

"This (you are aware from its description) is a shocking abode for girls; and as it will be equally improper to return to their original quaters, Miss Mark assures me till after the holidays, she requests I may lose no time in sending for Mary. Not having come out yet, it would puzzle me to know what to do with the child in London, occupied as we perpetually are, from morning till night; and as it will be impossible to return home under a month, for which time I have engaged an opera-box; pleading these very important reasons as my excuse for troubling my friends, I must beg of you, my dear nephew, to receive the little girl. I think she will be a nice companion for my grand-niece, who, I am longing to know, and who, I hope, will show the estimation in which she holds Mary, by accompanying her to Wales, where I shall meet them. Mr. Jones's gout, as usual, confines him to his room; Emma is not up yet, she was so overcome by seeing



Othello last night, and I am quite *au dèsespoir* at not being able to find a gentleman chaperon to attend me to Almacks this evening, &c. &c."

"P. S. Relying upon your goodness I have sent your address to Miss Mark, and expect Mary will reach Malvern a short day or two after you shall get this."

"What a strange girl my cousin must be," thought Edith, as with a spring she rose, and running flew to the prettiest room in the house, which she instantly settled was to be Mary's.

She opened the window to the balcony, surveyed in triumph the beautiful prospect, shook the glittering frost from the rose-trees, and searched eagerly for a bud that might promise soon to bloom. She found one, first-born from a folding leaf; an icicle hung upon its rosy cheek; "tears, tears so cold, no more," she cried, and (for it seemed cruel) turned her head away, but snatched the young thing from its parent. She pressed it to her lips, saying, "Ma mie, ma douce amie." This was not meant for the flower, though, deceived, the chill

that bound it hitherto was broken and melted by the tenderness of its nurse, dew-drops ran down the stem. Edith hesitated—then continued, “Eloped! ran away! impossible! Yet why should my aunt harbour such an idea?”

Here another doubt arose, Mr. Leslie had read of such things in the newspaper, and this decidedly expressed suspicion by a mother of her own child, proved the tales she had heard were not fiction; that there certainly must be some degree of truth in many of them was the conclusion to which Edith came, as she arranged a vase on the toilet-table, and carefully placed in it the flower intended to welcome her cousin.

Edith recollected, when a very little girl, being in a great house, in which many people were passing backwards and forwards, whose strange faces frightened her dreadfully, and another little girl, a wee bit less than herself, but older, (for she could talk better) would throw her arms round her neck and say: “Come, Edie, come wi’ me to de nursery, you won’t be frightened dare.” And

venly, who was not half so big, and did not  
her such a great way from the ground. The  
same little friend would say: "Don't cry,  
hab some tea, and a cake!" This she kne  
Mary; for the little girl had often tried to tea  
that name, but she could not then quite spe

Edith remembered this early friend w  
grateful love, and though trifles, such as the  
going, awakened the sentiment, in the c  
mind, these were powerful adjectives to the  
substantive; and by expressing her quality  
dowed Mary with many never-to-be-forg  
graces.

The cousins had not since met, and not  
standing her mother's introduction was calcu  
to cast a shadow over Mary's character,  
damaged the ardour of Edith's hope in  
approaching meeting, yet the near reali

knowing one of her own age and sex, endeared by youthful associations, like a charm kept Edith's feelings warm towards her friend.

She could not account for the sensation, but something held her breath, and she trembled, when a carriage drove up the avenue. It stopped at the portico; the steps were let down, and Mr. Leslie (who, upon its approach, guessing the occupant, summoned Edith to attend him to the door, that by waiving ceremony, her cousin might feel no restraint upon this her first appearance at Malvern) assisted his expected visitor from the carriage, and welcoming, commended her to Edith's care. One of the governesses belonging to Miss Mark's establishment, who had accompanied Mary, seeing her charge safe with her friends, now bade them a positive adieu, as she must return without delay to Cheltenham.

Relieved of a trunk, a band-box, and Mary de Winter, the vehicle passing lightly and rapidly over the stones was soon lost to view.

"How kind, how good you are," said Mary,

breaking into the first silence that succeeded the roll of the departing wheels ; “ words cannot convey an idea of the obligation I feel under, for a reception thus calculated to dissipate any embarrassment, and put me on the footing of one long known by you.”

Her look conclusive, told how much she wished this might be the case ; their eyes met, and from that moment the cousins, loving, understood each other.

“ It surely shall,” added Edith in an ecstasy, and seizing Mary’s hand led her to the ready chamber.

Although he had not sought or expected so much, Mr. Leslie was pleased with Mary’s appreciation of his attentions. The girl he first thought upon with doubt of her fitness to be his pure-minded daughter’s companion—coming as she had done from that nursery for the world, a boarding school—became, by an indescribable air of sweetness and candour in her address,

established in the father's home and heart, as the friend of his darling child.

Beauty of form and feature attracts universal attention, sometimes homage, and often admiration; but the intrinsic excellencies of the mind, because of a more subtle, essential character, escape those senses which are not likewise constituted. Perfection we conceive the result of both combined, and adoration is not sufficient to express the sentiment with which we, as it were, visionally contemplate this deification.

At the same time there are a few individuals in the world who are not beautiful, and consequently are not perfect, yet who, upon being presented to our view acquire a talismanic influence over the soul, win our confidence, captivate our affections, and finally influence the remainder of our existence. This is the consequence of sympathy, and "love at first sight" is its common signification. A pleasing exterior eminently assists the flame, but a plain one does not deteriorate from its brilliancy.

Mary de Winter and Edith Leslie were enamoured of each other, and the mystic bonds which held them each day grew more binding. Mary was one year Edith's senior ; she was short, slight, pale, and fair. Her eyes large, clear and open, but of a very light blue, bespoke a candid and a placid temper ; her forehead undulating and expressive ; her nose, small and straight, implied decision ; her lips were full but colourless ; and hair, extremely fair, plaited with studious neatness, descending down her cheek, was carried beneath her ear, till it met and united with a braid of the same, arranged low and in the form of a wreath at the back of her head.

When Mary spoke, her countenance became exceedingly interesting, as the gesture, discovering a range of the whitest and most regular small teeth, displayed the purity of her nature, and combined with the soft earnestness of her voice and manner, convinced of her moral worth the attentive beholder.

She was rather thoughtful than reserved, and

her opinion, grounded upon mature judgment, was asserted with mild but prevailing confidence.

Lady Hester was the sister of Mr. Leslie's mother, possessing little beauty and no fortune. After a long and unsuccessful campaign in the fashionable world, she became the wife of Jakes Jones Jenkins, a Welch squire, of great importance in his own country. After some years he succeeded to the estate and castle of Groyn Dinas, with the name and arms of de Winter ; and Lady Hester, while she retained the three crests, yet thinking incomparably ugly the two former of her husband's names, instantly adopted as her peculiar designation, that of de Winter, allowing Mr. Jones to preserve the one with which he had been longest associated.

His disposition was sleepy beyond rousing, or in other words, very indolent, whilst Lady Hester, as much his opposite as possible, with absolute sway, ruled her husband, his house and children.

Her marriage having been one of convenience, reduced, in her estimation, the man who accepted



a loveless and almost proffered hand, as an honour from the high-born lady who sacrificed herself to him.

In the scale of figures she viewed Mr. Jones as a cipher of no importance by himself, but gaining all and everything from her condescending and important union. Nor, in after life did she for a moment, forgetting, lay aside that superiority her husband at first had tacitly yielded to her.

Lady Hester was one of gaiety's most passionate votaries, and often when her husband prepared himself for repose, she dressed for the assembly and gorgeous saloon.

She had two daughters and a son. When her children arrived at the troublesome age of being able to open the nursery door without assistance, and running down stairs intrude, first their heads, and gaining confidence from the survey, their little persons into the drawing-room, and by their noisy mirth, and wild behaviour disturbing her visitors, Lady Hester began to feel they must be educated; and as to superintend, or be

overlooked by a governess in her own house, she voted a "boor and a nuisance."

The girls were sent out of the way to Miss Mark, who took a limited number, and whose establishment for young ladies being highly recommended by her friends, Lady Hester considered she had done her children a service in placing them there. The boy, of whom she was very proud, and being an only son, ridiculously fond, she kept at home, till, becoming thoroughly spoilt, and a pest, with abundance of tears, she was constrained to send him to school; from which, in the course of time, he was expelled, and ultimately from two other asylums of the same nature. He was presented to the superintendents of many more; but these trustees for the morals of their wards refused the notorious incorrigible, as a test too dangerous to be applied to the wavering virtues of their pupil-youth. At length she led her forlorn hope to France, where, more fortunate, he remained and finished his education.

Her eldest daughter arriving at the age of

twenty, Lady Hester felt obliged to lay aside any further pretensions to youth; and fatigued of acting a juvenile part, which now gained for her little besides derision, quite competent to the undertaking, she determined to appear upon the boards in the new character of chaperone.

The world gave her great credit upon the debut, and prophesied a series of such startling events ensuing, that those who fancied themselves meat for her eyrie, shunned this mother-falcon with all the caution of conscious weakness; and as the falcon is a noble bird, and preys on game much larger than herself, so this lady—no where finding her favourite treat, still proof against other lure—for three successive seasons hovered about with a famishing progeny, unable to pour upon a proper *parti*.

The year which dated Lady de Winter's let to her nephew, closed a fourth London season; the commencement of which people began whisper that pigeons must soon hide their heads as the falcon, rendered desperate by disappointment

might quarry them ; and the havoc thus begun would be increased by the entering of another daughter, as from the waning charms of Miss de Winter, they judged her sister must be full reclaimed, and only required unhooding in their presence, to prove her courage and strength of opinion.

However, unknown to these, Lady Hester had made a resolve according to the first important rule of the chaperonical grammar, not to publish a new edition of her work of nature, until the first and eldest born were taken off her hands ; besides she had but one other to provide for, and as that one was "little Mary," she had hitherto preserved her purpose inviolate, and until lately with no anxiety for its success.

Thus Mary, at the age I have presented her to my readers, remained at school ; in more explicit terms to await her sister's marriage, before her mother, feeling at leisure, should think fit to superintend her appearance upon the stage of life.

In her family Mary was generally the least regarded, being the most retiring, the youngest, and (what always condemned her in her mamma's opinion) the plainest.

Her sister Emma was a striking likeness of her mother, and, her years claiming soonest her attention, was considered by Lady Hester superior to Mary in every point of view.

While yet children, vain and ill-natured, Emma, as Miss de Winter, with impunity tyrannised over the little submissive Mary. Thus the child, suffering early, was taught to feel acutely, and hopeless of redress or compassion from any one, to hide those feelings in her bosom ; where fostering they grew and multiplied with her years, and as reflection came, stamped deep thought upon her young brow.

She could not understand the sweet sentiments her playmates attached to the word—home, for Lady Hester was too often engaged with gaiety abroad to permit of her receiving her girls even during the short space of their holidays. Mary

too had heard of a mother's affection ; she knew she had a mother, but almost believed that love was a beautiful theory taken from (for only found in) romance, and which, like some hungry demon, she felt aching in her own breast—an instance peculiar to herself and apart from the rest of human nature. Her sister Emma's concern at the same period was wholly confined to speculations upon when she should be presented at court, dance in public, and have beaux. Mary saw no pleasure in all this, and smiled at Emma's joy, as the approaching expiration of her last school-term promised the fulfilment of her fairest dreams.

Since her sister's introduction, when happier or more fortunate children had kind friends and cheerful homes to go to, Mary passed the weary hours of her holidays in the society of her governess, Miss Mark—an old maid of great prudery and reserve. From the constant recurrence of such intercourse, the young girl's manners received a bias—a ceremonious restraint beyond her years,

of which she could never wholly divest herself, and which gave a slight peculiarity to some of her notions; and all would agree with the first idea that arose in Edith's mind upon seeing her cousin, that she was the last to be suspected of eloping. But Lady Hester, remembering her own feelings when they were young, and knowing nothing of the character of this daughter, regarded her in the same light as other girls in the fashionable world, who, if allowed opportunity, were capable of anything, or everything, and whom every day evidences confirmed her in distrusting.

Mary journeyed towards Malvern with mingled sensations of distress and pleasure. A visit was an epoch in her life; the prospect of meeting "little Edie" delightful; but she thought of Mr. Leslie, a man nearly as old as her father, looking (not like him, half drowsy, and a country gentleman) but a soldier: the very name carried awe and terror with it. She wondered whether he

would think her half straight and steady enough in deportment and conversation.

She tried to call to mind the drill phrases she had once heard at a review, and witnessed the ready obedience of the men. Mr. Leslie had commanded a troop, and Mary felt like a recruit upon whom sentence must fall, for she did not know the proper evolutions. Besides the manner in which her mother (though she would not question its propriety) had conveyed to Mary the intelligence, through Miss Mark, that she was to spend a month at Malvern, and must get ready directly and repair thither, left the poor girl to fear that her arrival without further note or comment might be looked upon as intrusive; and she wished her mamma had desired her before she accepted the favour, to acknowledge it with a formal and grateful letter; which would be the means of paving the road to the introduction, and of saving all parties a considerable degree of embarrassment.

But her reception at Malvern, so opposite to



anything she had expected, at once astonished, delighted, and almost overcame her. Mrs. Leslie experienced what she had never known before, the kindness, which she repaid with an affection well placed and true, that time only gave her opportunities for rejoicing in it.

## CHAPTER IX.

The village matron, round the blazing hearth,  
 Suspends the infant audience with her tales,  
 Breathing astonishment! Of witching rhymes  
 And evil spirits; of the death-bed call  
 Of him who robb'd the widow and devour'd  
 The orphan's portion; of unquiet souls  
 Rise'n from the grave to ease the heavy guilt  
 Of deeds in life concealed; of shapes that walk  
 At dead of night, and clank their chains, and wave  
 The torch of hell around the murderer's head.

AKENSIDE.

To the cousins, days came like winged angels,  
 Radiant with love, joy, and hope! Mary was  
 happy; and as Edith's spirits rose, the bloom of  
 health again visited her cheek; melancholy  
 seemed absent from her brow, except when in

Nelly, as the well that had nursed the youth of Malvern's mistress ; and as such was not an unapt comparison : entertainment while in Nelly's society, listening her upon various topics, in some degree, be likened to witnessing the effect produced by throwing pebbles into the whirlpool of crystal ; for the innumerable whirls and eddies, rising to its pure surface, were beautiful or more original than the matter and engrossing interest of all

Mary was a lover of the marvel. As Nelly's details had been hitherto strictly to facts, she proposed to herself the extreme of novelty from the old and well-remembered proficiency in legendary lore.

It was accordingly arranged by the

to their departure for Wales should be devoted to the influence of spells, spirits, and charms, as Mary insisted that the delusion of her existence at Malvern should be so supported as to convey to her own mind the idea of enchantment; for she was sure such bliss was unusual here below. Indeed, though Edith chided her for the supposition, Mary perseveringly repeated that she must never expect the like again.

At length the evening of note arrived; and wrapped in close mantles, the cousins, now walking, now running, sped their way across the broad moor that separated Malvern from the hamlet of Rochelle.

They were attended by the faithful and sedate Meteor, whose eyes perpetually rolled from right to left, pierced the distance, and anon were cast behind. Proud of the trust reposed in him, (for conscious of its worth) the noble animal was zealously watchful over his charge, and Edith regarded each motion of her dog's head with something like the deferential awe a youthful

maiden might be supposed to have, whilst reading in a bearded augur's countenance the preface of her destiny.

It was late when they arrived at Nelly's cottage; before they entered, Mary turned timidly round, and with straining eyes endeavoured to view the drear waste over which their route had lain. Darkness dimmed all but its outline; the night was ushered in by lowering clouds, and announced by wild gusts of wind, that at one moment swept clear the firmament, discovering myriads of stars; the next brought with them dense masses of vapour, shrouding the moor, in a gloom so fearful as to hide for a while the hope of ever seeing the heavens again. 'Twas cold, and Mary shuddered, when addressing Edith, she hoped her cousin "had not forgotten to provide a guide and safeguard against the time they should bend their steps towards home; she did not think it prudent for young girls to expose themselves to chance insult, or to what



the world might say, by venturing abroad at night, unprotected but by a mere dog."

Though Edith could not understand her cousin's scruples, never having heard or dreamt of the dangers at which Mary hinted, she hastened to assure her that Power, whom Mr. Leslie never failed to send for herself when alone, would, no doubt, come as usual, and bring a lantern with him, so that it was impossible they could miss their way; Edith added, that with regard to herself she felt no fear whatever when Meteor was near, and with the blessing she possessed of a foot light and swift as the breeze that blew past them. Mary, satisfied concerning the point she had inquired into, raised no further scruples that might encroach upon Edith's security, as she became conscious that the principles of her cousin's statement were based upon the simplicity of her education, which might still preserve this fair one blameless in those sylvan regions; but whose pure faith would meet with sad mis-constructions if her guilelessness caused her to

transgress the rigid rules of etiquette in a more populous neighbourhood, where busy tongues scattered the imaginations of fertile but unwise and ill-ordered brains.

Mary had imbibed her sentiments at a school where youth was educated for the world, taught by the every-day occurrences of life to steer as clear as possible of the great rock—*slander*, upon which an unskilful mariner must surely be lost.

Nelly sat in her old oaken chair, whose deeply carved back, mounted lofty and grimly above her white kerchiefed head, forming a dark relief and fine contrast to her benignant features, whose pale intelligence was increased by the red flaming glare of a wood-fire that tinged not her cheek with its colour, but enlightened it all. A delicious odour distilled from the logs of pine-fir that burned on the hearth, filled Nelly's apartment, and pleasingly greeted Mary's senses, whose imagination prepared her for the nauseous exhalations of sulphur, which is said to be a favourite and indispensable element among witches, whose

are supposed to appear doubly haggard  
held through the medium of its jaundiced  
; thus, rendering oblivious of their tem-  
state those who consult their oracles ;

these awful fumes possess the more  
property of stupefying every faculty of the  
lupe.

no grizzly witch, needing delusion, was  
out a woman, still fair, though aged, whose  
l Mary felt almost tempted to kiss, and  
lender hand she pressed affectionately.

, closing the door behind her, claimed  
attention, as she with some difficulty drew  
s from their long rest, that grated moodily  
fixed them in their rusty sockets ; then  
ring the little round table extinguished a  
hat lay thereon, when pointing out to  
chair of less ample dimensions, but of the  
ign and antiquity as that in which Nelly  
placed herself upon a three-legged stool  
feet, and rested her head on the good  
nee. This was her wont when a child,



and within the last year the loss of her mother caused Edith to resume it. Nature teaching her that the attitude implied she had become more sensitive than ever of a dependence for feminine love and sympathy upon this dear nurse, now alone left to supply in her breast that wide want.

Edith looking archly in Nelly's face, asked her thanks for having done so satisfactorily the honours for the sorceress of the Shell of the Rock to her visitor.

"Bless thee, bless thee, my darling!" said the old woman, stroking the maiden's soft cheek, "I was thinking but just now of sad things, whilst looking upon beautiful; and it is pleasant, it would be, but not well, to have my sweet nursing always near; aye! close and closer to me than even now. To-morrow, for a while, she will leave the home of her first breathing, but cradled in my heart she can never leave that."

"Come, come, dearest Nelly," said Edith coaxingly, "only consider how *ma bonne's* kisses

turn ;" and, becoming suddenly serious, continued, "remember what I brought my  
my mystery-loving cousin, and came myself  
this very now, from the lips of the gifted  
Rochelle."

the superstitious are always timid, I have  
langer out of doors ; and to increase the  
delusion within I have extinguished a  
(a thing of common-place fact) which,  
at be well aware, was never created by  
tion, and never yet assisted the imagina-  
reasting."

to prevent reply, which she knew would  
painful subjects, Edith exclaimed, "Be-  
listen to wise things and terrible," when  
in her eyes she consumed her attention

menced laying the foundation of a stocking; for Nelly could not bear her hands to be idle. She said, "with regard to obeying her child's pleasure, that same was easy to her, who had learned the how ever since this maiden was a baby; for if her little lady was uneasy, or cried to have her way, 'tis out of bed herself would get in the dead of the coldest night, her old bones *craking* all the while, and coddling snug the wilful deary, she would walk up and down the room, singing the softest lullaby. When, quite asleep she laid her darling fair and easy in her cot, which she kept swinging and swinging till sure she was gone off entirely; then herself would get into bed again, much with the same care that a mother hen gets into the nest with her first brood, all in eggs under her; though to be sure the baby wasn't there, only for fear she might waken her."

Mary laughed at the old woman's description of her initiatory lessons in obedience; and the cat Prim, who had been deliberately washing his face with his lily-white paw, raised his head and

pon her, and seemingly pleased with the lady's affability, sprung into her lap, and round three times, lay still, composing to rest.

All now," said Nelly, "I never in all my days seen the fellow o' that; there's good and bad, I'll be bound, in the cat's mind this and, seeing Mary's eagerness to know he meant, Nelly continued: "why, then, is puzzled to understand the rights of the but it is a current and true sign in ould, and may be it stands good here, that the reason among many in a room that a cat after he has washed his face clean, is by ne token the first in that company to be l; but it is also certain sure, that if a cat takes a liking to jump into the lap of a lady, without knowing from whence she is, she is, that very young lady will die an old

l, Nelly," replied Mary, "I suppose I attempt to ridicule the airy-fed, chame-

lion superstitions of your country; but though our acquaintance has not been long, Prim and I are very good friends, and why he came to me is because he knows he is welcome."

"A fine compliment truly you pay the brute beastly, and 'tis proud he ought to be upon it, if he knew his own interest; but it seems, as I said, cat and fate have been too long acquainted for Prim to shew manners by coming down to his own floor instead of dreaming of Miss de Winter's destiny; and so, Miss Mary, (for I can take a hint better than the cat) you mean by what you said a while ago, not to believe the elegant tale of the banshee yourself settled I was to make known to you, with all the Irish talk that I can let into it, to give the same a charm. Mind, I won't listen to your answer, for I am afeared it would put me out intirely.

"To begin then, I'll tell you how I was ~~insensed~~ into those matters, and how I came to pay respect to Michael Reardon's story (which is the finest I know) was this. I was the only girl or boy my

mother had, and in coorse she was doatingly fond of me. When I was a weeny thing, my mother was blowing the fire, which had near gone out ; and I, to assist her, got one small red-hot cinder out of the ashes, put it into a wisp of straw, and holding it near my mouth, began puffing and puffing, when, to be sure, a fine blaze came forth. I was delighted at my cleverness, and hastened to throw it in the grate ; but I didn't reach far enough, and the burning wisp fell on the hearth, and in far less than no time there was nothing to be seen of it but a few light white ashes, with a single black straw here and there across them. I looked down at them (I was vexed) and my pride was hurt, not so much on account of my failure, as to see, sneering at me, the little worthless, mean remains of the great thing I had but a minute before in my hands, and the smoke of it blinding my eyes.

My mother laughed at me, and this made bad worse ; I began to cry, for sure 'twas trying to assist her the evil had happened to me. My tears

fell upon the ashes, the wind they made in falling blew some of the white floss away, but the water *drowned* the most. In the midst of this in comes a woman. I'll never forget her face, for I saw it often afterwards in my dreams. She was darker than midnight, and uglier than iniquity ; and when she opened her mouth, which she did very often without speaking, her teeth were ~~so~~ white, it was like flashes of lightning before you — I was frightened out of my wits ; nevertheless I stood stock still, as if I grew there. Mother seemed to guess who the creature was, though she was puzzled, as she afterwards told me, that such a being would dare to enter where there was a well-made and proper horse-shoe, nailed firm and fast high over the door. Now Molly Mac Mahon was a body who never believed anything that she did not see straight in the front of her, and would as soon hearken to or heed what a fortune-teller or witch said, as the man in the moon, who is too far away to know anything about such people ; at any rate she wasn't

troubled to listen, for the woman was dumb, and deaf too for all that I know, for she wouldn't stir an inch, though mother said heaps of things to banish her ; then she pointed to the door and waved her hand ; but the woman did not understand her motion, that would have turned any one else out before they were inside.

"Well," said mother at last, tired out of patience, "unwelcome as ye are, strange stranger ! unclean creature ! sit ye down till my good man comes home. I'll let him say his say, or do his do, as he pleases and will, with the self of you."

When mother finished this sentence, the woman turned on her a glare, which she said she would not forget till her dying day. The being's eyes were like fixed stars, and she mumbled in her swelling throat something resembling pent-up thunder.

Whether she had seen through the lattice what I had been about, I can't guess ; but certain



'tis, she knelt down close beside me, exactly opposite where the wisp had fallen.

In my second terror the life came back to my limbs, and I rushed with a shriek into my mother's arms, who clasped me tight, for she now began to be afraid.

The dumb looked long, and deeply regardfully at the self-same spot when she rose, and taking the bellows from my mother, wrote upon its back with a bit of chalk; and still keeping a hold of the same, dived one of her hands into a pocket that I thought she would never come to the end of, but which in due time it seems she did; for to my certain knowledge she brought up a bottle, and though what was in it smelt mighty like whiskey, I could not bring myself to say it was anything half so innocent; for this she poured upon the very cinder I had picked out of a thousand, and the great blue flame that rose up covered the hearth, and was gone in a minute! taking away to its unseen dwelling every trace of a straw, and my tears that might have else lain

full long, for 'twas a polished stone flag they  
m.

ter this the woman, pulling my mother near  
r, beckoned that she might read what she  
written, which for sheer dread, my mother  
not help doing, and aloud too, in these  
s: "Grief shall dig thy grave. Thy child—  
only one—her thou lovest—before thrice  
y years are told, shall leave her religion—  
untry—her people—thee. Sorrow shall be  
wake, and in another land her bones  
rot and be as the ashes of this cursed

mother trembled when she finished, and  
man had vanished. Mrs. Mac Mahon, as I  
efore, was not given to believe anything  
ious, but this fairy-woman (as she certainly  
ave been) made such an impression upon  
she said she could never tell. And sure  
y, the creature punished her sore for her  
ef. What took most hold of mother's  
as the *why*, but to warn her of harm, the

creature came, for she had not a tenpenny to give her, nor was it like she'd do that same though it were ever so near her hand. Any how it was enough to astound a mountain to see how well the weird one knew that Mrs. Mac Mahon was learned, for that same relation of mine was the only woman in Munster, except among the *quality*, who could read, and 'twas she taught me.

Moreover the horse-shoe that mother had laughed at father for putting there was clane gone off the door when she went to look for it. My father said, it was a comely one, and fixed as tightly as the stars in the heavens; and mother declared it must have been *spirited* away; though foolish talking folk would perhaps think they were both deceived, and that it hung loosely upon a rusty nail, being easy to whip off, and so make the wonder less. Another matter which looked truly odd was, that mother niver missed anything that night, save and except a silver buckle she wore on her right shoe; for Mrs. Mac Mahon

was well-to-do in the world, and loved grandeur; but this, she thought, came off, and so was lost when she went to feed the pigs, and her foot stuck in the mud.

To make a long story short, I must come to the end of it. My poor parent was very weakly, and after what the witch had told her, she thought she could not live above a short time; and having come of high Romanist parents she was in the first of her days very strict, and now—the thinking she must soon die, made her more particular than ever. Indeed she beat her own kin on all sides out and out; so you may well believe when I tell you, that she took to heart more than anything else my becoming a turncoat, and she did all in her power to prevent the evil, as she deemed it, coming upon a child of her's. She instructed me very early in the missal; and I could tell my beads, and cross myself with as much devotion as Father Flanagan himself; and this all before I understood the meaning of that and of most other things. My

mother paid him too, and for once the parish priest blessed in English and sprinkled with holy water other children; he blessed me twice in real Latin, (D) and I was nearly stifled with the water showered on me. My mother bemoaned herself, that I was not christened after a regular calendar saint, but as she saw the impossibility of my coming into the world over again, she found 'twas no use wailing, though the never the less did it make her do so; for she was by nature sorrowful-like, and the hard penances she put on herself wore her body with her spirit away, till sickness and sadness was all they left of her.

She visited on foot every saint's well in the half of Ireland; and as I grew strong and able for a walk, she took me with her, and I tore my petticoat in slips, and hung them on the trees and bushes, till not a petticoat had I often to go home in; a rag at most was the best of it; but (saving your presence, ladies) I always kept my nether garment whole—things that many young as I were taught to do without; for want had

them to nothing so comfortable. Well—  
morning, at the dark hour of four, up gets my  
; and dresses herself and me—takes not  
ed to eat—and off we sets to the greatest  
well near; which nevertheless was far  
for a stout man to be tired by the time  
there.

ed on a good sturdy pair of brogues, in  
I felt very easy, but mother filled her's  
d peas hard as boys' marble-bowls. Some  
s she split to make her walking worse, and  
er poor feet they didn't.

somever on she limped, till nothing short  
nright agony drove her to take them off,  
lk a while without any stocking or shoe,  
ad, or indifferent. When the bleeding of  
t was stopped by being plastered with dust,  
les of the sores filled up with the bits of  
and gravel that got in, on went the  
again, till our king's highway was  
by red blood that came through the  
les of her shoes.

die peaceably, and have done, if a sincere parent.

I know I know how last; and if it was

the morning, it was

Father gave us wanting (as it might

be, and my mother's

we had not broken our

I went to bed—missed

day, for I woke not till

that rose to the top of what plight I should find

up I jumps, and with hardly a

was down the ladder in a little

I slept with the servant, a

next the thatch, with a b Deep of day in.

Well, there was a long narrow me and the kitchen, on the other was my mother's room. In

might be, of this passage, there was a neat latticed window, though to be sure a scrap of glass remained out in one part or another of it; but these were, for the most, stopped up with rags, and one side long clean gone, an old hat of father's made shift to fill up.

Here Nelly paused—and addressing herself to Mary, said: “What I am coming to is the remarkablest part of mystery—so mind it thoroughly, and explain the same out of mystery to yourself if you can, for I never could. When I got to the beginning of the passage, I heard the most sad and sorrowful nullagones, that were plainer and more plaintive as I drew near the window. They came up like a maiden's tones, but not one with the breath of this world in her. I never heard such before or since, nor will I forget the unearthly music. I was all over in a cold sweat, and my arms seemed to have been hung on to my body, and not to have been born with it. How my feet carried me there I can't tell; but I felt myself looking out of the window,



and as sure as I sit here, there sat, on a large white stone just beyant me, a woman, singing wildly, and combing with her fingers her long black hair. The moon came down on her head, showing me every lank and tangled lock on it, shining like water in the night time.

"The banshee! the banshee!" I cried, and fled to my mother's room. She was lying in her bed, pale and wan; but when I came in like a mazed thing, she got half way up, and leaning on her elbow, said: "What! hast thou seen her, my child?"

"O yes," I replied, "O yes! to my sorrow and cost."

"Make yourself easy, my honey, for it is no use to hide it; she waits for me! I came of an ancient, ould, noble stock, and faithful to every born one of it, she has chanted to their spirits on their way upwards, and is here mindful of mine."

And true to her words, as to the vision of that even, my mother died the same night. Yet

before this happened, I went into the yard with my father; but there was no sign or trace of a creature, or footstep to be seen. The great bull mastiff, Tara, that was bould as a lion and fierce as a tiger, and who the whole country round knew would not let any, barrin my mother, come near her, was there in her kennel as quiet as you please, and close to the big stone on which the banshee sat, and which was the one the cow's liver for the dog's eating was dropped upon.

Before I finish my tale, I must tell you the last part of it, which isn't a taste less *quare*, and is remembered as if it happened yesterday.

My country people would say, it showed how my mother couldn't forget, even long after her death, what was written consarnin' me, and how the thoughts of my being a heretic, or leaving the land I was bred and born in, *throubled* her, although father paid for a power of masses for the rest of her soul.

A little little girl (a cousin of my own) used to now and again to play with me. One day

us wet out of doors. So, to the barn I  
mething or other kept my cousin back a  
I was waiting, wondering what ailed  
he didn't come. I gazed up at the roof,  
high above my head, and, sure enough,  
the rafters stood my mother—the wind-  
about her, white as the last time I saw  
ll year and more past. When she saw I  
she stretched out her arm, which was  
e light that you could see through. She  
, but beckoned with her hand for me to  
er, and I sunk down on the floor in a dead  
seems father found and picked me up ;  
I came to myself I was lying on the mat  
e kitchen fire, and he kneeling down  
washing my temples with whiskey and



“Remember, dear young ladies! (you, Miss de Winter especially)” said Nelly, as she concluded her first tale, “that what I have just related, and what I am about to tell, is strictly true, as regarding the manners and superstitions of my nation. These may sound unnatural to English ears, which are every-day occurrences in my native land; having descended to the oldest inhabitants, from their ancient fathers, of whose life-time, the generation after Noah knew more than I am able to recollect just now. You must forgive also, my children, the prosy, round-about way of an old woman, who at her years finds it hard to souple a rusty tongue.”

Nelly had, by this time, finished the foot of a stocking, and her ball of worsted was dwindled. “I think,” she remarked, “we shall have done both together, myself talking, and the wool fashioned to wear; not as the tender lambs wore it either, for the never a bit of a sock had they on their little trots, though I’ll warrant you every

needful part is taken care of for the daisy creatures."

To begin Michael Reardon's story, I must give you a notion of how everything he said came to be put faith in.

A nate and a decent lad was Michael, and the same was groom to my master, Mr. Dermod, who died in battle and glory. Michael had a fine large silver watch, which he favoured and took pride out of, as it had been handed over to him by his mother, coming down from his great grandfather.

Nevertheless, this watch gave him a plaguy sight of trouble, for 'twas always wanting new works, or something done to its inside. Now Michael had dreams that the air of no other place than Cork would restore his watch when it was out of order, as the lively article had been made there: for the maker's name was still to be read in it, though he himself, in right of his father before him, had long been dead. Accordingly to Cork Michael went, every now and again,

to have the tiresome thing doctored. One time returning after a like step of some three dozen rale Irish miles, with the watch in his fob, and Michael whistling for joy of its sounding soundness, (and may be to make the road asy) he came in view of a cabin, the appearance of which—though sorra a taste of a window was there in the same—but as 'twas built and thatched with turf, and had a shapely hole in the top to let off what smoke was'nt wanted to warm the inside, made Michael think to himself that it wouldn't be amiss if he just stepped in and lit his pipe, by way of company to him on the few miles he had yet to overtake before he reached the stable-door. No sooner thought than done. "So here goes," says Mike, leaping a turf-drain that hindered the shortest cut; and after wading for a small number of yards up to his middle in bog, he lifts the latch; when (calling down a blessing on the heads of its owners, and wishing them good luck ever and soon to their hearts' *contint*) he goes to the fire he guessed they must have (if they had

nothing else,) and emptying out the ashes of his pipe, set about putting the fresh *backy* in. No one had spoken up to this time, though there was a little more than a few people in the hut.

Michael began to wonder they said nothing, after all the civil words he used, and the neighbourly liberty with which he entered. Indeed he made bold to think them mighty *quare* people entirely; and setting fire to the end of his shillelah with the intention of scorching the quid-een, he brought it near his mouth—when the light fell upon a girl's face; her eyes were sunken, yet still beautiful, and they were fixed on his with such deep *maning*, that he dropped his pipe and shillelah, and down he went on his knees beside her in a minit. Michael was *tinder*-hearted; and when he saw that she looked like the sister of death himself, and was lying on a bed of straw, with hardly a tack to cover her, he was melted, and cried like a baby: nor was it only that, but he knew who she was, though so altered; and the thoughts of the girl he loved, but who

carried herself too high to have anything to say to him in those days, came back to his mind, and seeing how she was reduced nearly kilt him.

He talked to her till he almost raved with grief; but for all the iligant things he said, she did not give so much as a sign. He now knew 'twas sorrow for her that kept the house silent. The dame sat on the floor with her head in her hands, and the childher were all huddled together into a corner to keep themselves warm, for not a screed had they to cover them.

At last Michael's loud lamentations roused the old woman, and bending near him she whispered in his ear: "Softly, softly, lad! don't disturb her soul—she's past mortal speech or help. If you would do us a good turn now in the time of the world's desartion, just give a bit o' candle to light her spirit out of this darkness. 'Tis all she waits for, and 'twould be a relief to the whole of us, if Mary died easy."

"Wouldn't a drop of the crathur do her good?"



asked Michael; "something to eat might be the making of her."

At his mention of eating, the children uttering a faint craving cry pressed round him, and one and all, fast moving their jaws, seemed actually devouring his words.

"Ye shall have a morsel, if I sell my watch to get the pratee," exclaimed the shuddering Michael.

Upon this, the small eyes of a lank and red-haired boy twinkled with a gleam of something that told Michael instantly he had better not have mentioned the watch; so, with a bound he rose, and promising to bring relief to them soon, was in the stable rubbing down "Cruishkeen" before he gave himself time to think.

At the first peep o' day, Michael, carrying a sack of potatoes, some of them ready-boiled, a few leeks, and a fine piece of salt ling, set out for the hovel. I was going to forget what he didn't. One bottle of whiskey, some broth in another (made by myself to his receipt) and the candle,

filled his two coat pockets. He trudged on as if he was the starving, and the people he was going to were to feed him ; but this time, thinking as he said, the red herring had a feeling notion of catching a silver sprat if 'twas to cross his fins, Mike left his watch at home.

The dirty-faced, naked children met him about a quarter of a mile from the hut, and welcomed their benefactor by tearing the load from his back, and squatting on the bare ground began bolting down their throats whole potatoes, with pieces of the dried fish. Michael knew he might as well dare to deal with wolves, as dream of attempting to delay their meal; so, picking up a fragment or two of fish, and a few potatoes for the old woman, he left the group and made off to the cottage.

“And is this all ye have brought us?” said the wretched woman with a groan.

“When you’ve eaten that, I’ll get more, if there’s any left,” said Michael.

He was surprised by her putting it away from

her, and closing her mouth with a dumb expression of despair. "Why thin, what do you mean? have you forgotten the way to eat?" cried Michael.

She smiled on him a ghastly smile, and then added: "The poor childer must be fed first."

"And if it is the childer that comes in the way of your appetite, you may be asy, and ate now; for as I am the born son of my mother, I left the crathurs gobbling a sack of potatoes, and fish into the bargain, a few sprightly paces up the road yonder."

This assured her; and the famished being seizing the victuals, devoured them for all the world like nothing Michael ever beheld before or since. He declared the children's exhibition of hunger was a joke to her's; and to make the victuals do the old crone good, her weans came in, bringing the raims of their meal; and 'twould satisfy a raven to see how continted all these poor creatures were.

The first thing the dame Mrs. Molony did,

by way of grace after she had eaten, was to light the candle Michael brought, and put it, instead of a candlestick, into the fist of poor Mary's smallest sister ; who, squatting on the floor, held it near the mouth of the same, that her spirit might be shown the way to the clear blue sky that looked down through the chimney.

Michael knelt on the cold clay by the dying girl, whose bodily presence was as faint and incomprehensible as the night before, her tongue speaking as little ; for she did not talk at all ; but when he brought the whiskey near her lips, and winked to show it was something good he had got, and wished her to taste by the sly, she closed her eyes, and seemed more dead than ever. I suppose the smell overcame her, for she did not come to the ghost of herself, till Mick conveyed the drop clean away, and she opened her beautiful peepers, and tried to say something, which appeared as if it would sound like gratitude ; but not a word or the letter of a word did Michael hear. Then he axed for a cup ; and Mrs. Molony

gave him half a *tay-sruicer*, the only bit of ehaney she had, and a hollow marrow-bone for a spoon. Michael put his finger into one end of the marrow-bone, to stop up the hole; and filling it at the other with broth, he held the same to Mary's lips, and was ready to dance out of his shoes when he saw her swallow it all. He filled the bone again, but she would not have any this time.

At last Michael, after trying her a great deal, and coaxing till he was tired himself, asked her mother, "why she wouldn't take any more?" No sooner was his head turned than Mary's small sister (without saying so much as "by your leave") began gulping the soup; nor could he have found it out just then, but something alive in his pocket made Michael whisk round, and to be sure there was the little chit draining the bottle down her throat, whilst the lean lad, her brother, had his hand in Michael's fob.

"And is this the way," said Michael, "that you would be after thanking me for bringing the life and victuals to you this blessed morning?"

Me, Michael Beardon myself, that is a ruined man on account of you. Did not I sell the watch that was father, mother, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, cousin, and all to me, for to be the saving of you from starvation?"

This was a lie Michael told, and not the more right though he had a good end in it; for he knew it would be a sorer stroke to the family, the thoughts of his being made a beggar through his kindness to them, than if he had flayed the red-haired boy alive on the spot for his assurance.

He was right when he guessed the effect it would have upon them; for no sooner had he said his say, and looked round as if he had not another farthing in the world to bless himself with, than down at his feet went every mother's child of them, and began grieving for what they had done, like so many cats with their tails trod upon.

Sorrowful—Michael sped homewards that day, for he had a misgiving that evil was to come upon

some one he cared for, though not the soul of kith or kin had he belonging to him, within or beyond every mile upon the earth.

The sun shone like the bride's face, and the birds sang like pipers at a wedding; but not one peep from Michael's eye was at liberty to see anything but the sadness inside of him. He thought to himself it might enliven him, and drive the boding away, if he just stepped into the stable, and took a sight of Cruishkeen, and may be trim his stall neat a bit. With this tidy intention Mike opens the stable door, when a horrid screech made him find his senses, just time enough to see his favourite kitten Milch, that had come to welcome him, lying under one of his feet.

He had stepped upon the middle of her body. She lay in her death-agony, looking up at him, for all the world as if she had something to say to him, and would if she had strength.

I need not tell you how soon Michael lifted up his foot, but 'twas little good when he did, for

Milch screeched more than ever, and hopped all on one side, dragging the other after her, for above a yard; when losing the blood that came from her ears, eyes, and mouth, weakened her so, as to take the power of moving away intirely.

Michael put her in his bosom; there she died, and sitting on a truss of straw, that was held together with a hay-band or soughan, he could not do more for an age than rocking himself backwards and forwards, bewailing the ill luck that must come of all this, while tears streamed down his cheeks at the thought of Milchy's cruel death; nor could Michael face Cruishkeen after what he had done, for he felt the horse would blame him, as the kitten was a special and particular favourite of the same, who used to play with him in his manger, taking her up in his lips and putting her down again; when Milch would get into the rack a-top of the hay, and box Cruishkeen through the rungs, never scratching him all the while, nor did he once hurt her; and night and day the kitten slept on Cruishkeen's



back, and often purred him to sleep when tired and restless after a hard day's hunting.

Now poor Cruishkeen could not eat in peace, for Milch used to keep the rats off while he had his corn.

All this and more came into Michael's head, while he sat on the truss of straw, where he might have staid till next day, and no one to disturb him, had not a tap on the outside of the stable-door made him say, "come in ;" and before he stood Mary's bit sister, a'most naked, except that was covered by the ragged uppermost part of her mother's cloak (who kept herself necessarily as decentest of the family, as she had to go miles a'goin', in order to preserve common life in the place.)

"Mary's dead," said the little girl. "The cloak lasted till she was gone, and had no use for it ; and mother sent me to fetch of the great and gracious Mr. Michael (yourself) to give something towards buying Mary's holiday-things that are

pledged, with everything else that was in the house, at the pawnbroker's in Cork ; for mother could not forgive herself if Mary was waked as she is, and thinks it a binding duty to make poor sister fine and comfortable at last, as it might reflect upon her in another world."

Here the little girl put a packet of pawnbroker's duplicates into Michael's hand. "There," says she, "be's the titles to all we might have had now, but for Mary's long sickness. Mother entrusts them to your honour, Mr. Michael Reardon, in the belief that a gentleman, bred and born (like yourself,) will take a slender pity upon the naked and lane distress of nine of us, and a dead sister."

"By the hole in my coat," exclaimed Michael, taking the duplicates, "'tis myself ~~w~~ill dress from head to foot the girl I loved, at last." And seeing the child about to go, he asked, "and what for are you turning your back on me, ma colleen?"

"Don't you see," said she, "I am clothed and

all ready for a journey"—stooping her head, that Michael might look into the hood, where were some of the potatoes he had carried the family that morning. "I am going all the way into Kerry to fetch my uncles and cousins to the wake, and tell them to bring the poteen of the mountains; they make it there from the dew, and 'tis special fine, and so chape that you may have it for the tasting. Don't tell anybody but yourself," whispering close—"my uncles—the both of them—are *stillers*, and we will be main grand that-a-way."

"But do you know the road?" axed Michael.

"Faix, an its a quare question you're after axin', to doubt that same, Mr. Michael; you might as well say at *wonst*, that a sweep can't find his way up the chimly. I'll be there and rested before to-morrow's sun winks his eye. Don't forget the vow you just made to dead sister—and so good-bye to ye!"

Michael was soft-natured, and the flattery melted him intirely; so up he rips some of the

paving stones, and down under them he puts Milch in a snug birth, with his cravat for a winding-sheet; and now he knew the ill-luck she foretold after she was kilt, he wiped away the tears whilst he thought that poor Mary had died at last out of the way of suffering, because he made her body comfortable with the broth, and helped her spirit to blessedness through the candle.

Though 'twas early, Michael littered down Cruishkeen for the night; but he didn't go near the horse's head, lest the creature would reproach him; and having got leave from his master and my master, he betakes himself a far aways to the iligant town of Cork, the diadem of the fair Lee, the reigning queen of waters. And if he did get there, so as surely he brought, to their rightful owners, the never a ticket of a duplicate, but the one only and Sunday suit of every brat in the hut, and all Mary Molony's things, which she had ever since she was in sarvice. He also begged a few thirteens from the master and missus, with which

Mrs. Molony bought some crockery, candles, pipes and tobacco, for the wake, with plenty of potatoes.

Of course Michael was specially invited to be present; and to be sure the night they fixed for the same, Michael dressed in his best, began his road up that beautifullest mountain of his own parts. It was christened a long Irish name, which idle folks said was to suit the distance it took you to come to the top of it, because they didn't trouble themselves to know better; but which word (that in my mother-tongue I have forgotten) means in plain English "the sun's cradle;" for 'tis there he sleeps every night regularly, though he is up and away to another place so early that never was a body known to see him take off his night cap.

'Twas a dangerous walk in a dark hour; nevertheless Michael was young, lithe, and fearless; and a crab among rocks, or a goat of the hills, were nothing compared to this son of the heather and glen. The frost was sharp and sharper as he

went, and Michael thought of the true poteen that would soon warm his inside. Then a mountain torrent roared just in his very front, and wishing that it had taken another course, Michael plunges, as it were, through its foam, and scarcely panting, rests on the rough bowl of a gaunt or giant pine, black and rugged as the clefts from which it springs. In a minute more he crumples under his hardy tread the crisp furze of a century's rearing. Safe and soft he finds himself half-way up the mountain, and on the beat of the regular road, when, turning round, he proposes taking a look at the old tower of Carrigvhair, as he loved its hoary height, for under his special care was the same; and it guarded and walled Cruishkeen's stable. Cruishkeen, the favourite hunter of Mr. Dermot, (the solid, stately, stalled, but in the field, sprightly Cruishkeen) lived there in ease and undisturbed by the clanging hoofs or rough neighing of his less-regarded companions of the chase, who had broad booths of their own in the ample mews. Ah! 'tis well myself remembers

Cruishkeen ! I think I can see him now ; the children running under the very girths of him, and pulling his switch-tail whilst he is as quiet, meek, and gentle as a new-born lamb ; taking all their tricky teasings like its own mother's milk, and suffering them to climb over any part of him, as if he was that creature, and only felt the tongue of the same sheep caressing her yearling.

But on the turf another nature sparkled in his eyes ; and impetuous, ever first, never baulking the deepest brake, or highest vault, the pride and the power of the land, he was invincible in his might. So declared the honoured gentleman that blessed Cruishkeen with his load. But I must account to you, young ladies, for Cruishkeen's promotion to so grand, ancient, and fated a place as the tower, said Nelly, with a sigh, that intimated that she was not too old to remember sorrow.

My first mistress (long gone, yet mourned still) was delicate always, and for her health it was recommended that she should be constantly near the

dwelling or breath of cattle ; but as 'twas a long way to the mews, and she was too timid to ride, and dreaded anything in the shape of a cow loose in the meadow, and hated the bare sight of a stalled ox, Mr. Dermod had Cruishkeen to reside in the tower with a groom (Michael) all to himself, just under the first story (which was the nursery) where Mrs. Dermod spent most of her time. Michael lodged at night in the top of the tower, and could see right and left of him for miles. So you may well believe that man and horse were dignified and exalted above mention.

I began by saying that Michael came to the beaten road that runs round the side of the "sun's cradle." Now having got there, he takes a view of the country, and surrounded by the Galtee mountains—on whose venerable heads sat the stars—compassed with dark forests, and many a winding water, lay Carrigvhair, sleeping like a child in its mother's bosom, or a rale rosy apple-potatoe in the loving heart of the earth.

"'Tis a darlint of a place," said Michael, "and



prettier than the moon's cheek at this minit, for I can't see that at all at all." With this thought Michael turned his head upwards to be sure of what he said; but, if he did, the azure curtain hid her glory from him, and quite contented in his mind as to his choice, down comes his eyes again to say with them "good bye," for a while, to the valley he worshipped. But this time something brighter than anything dazzled them so as to make Michael believe he had no sight left—that 'twas all gone away from him to the spangles above.

At last he saw that he saw, and was sure he saw—for the light forked out into three lights like three blazes of fire, red, yellow, and shiney—it wound along at a distance from the earth—it passed over the same crooked path he had taken—glanced across the mountain torrent—shone brighter as it passed the old pine, and verily he believed it was coming towards him. Michael was a good Catholic, and in full belief of what his religion could do, he crossed himself, put up a

prayer to St. Michael, his patron, said the anti-phone and salve regina, and the three lights were put out ; but instead of them, was a figure taller than the tallest, clothed 'in deep mourning, close folded round it. He thought he'd try the salve-regina over again ; and as sure as he did so, the figure stood still—and at the last words, cut round the other side of the mountain, at the top speed of the swiftest.

“It ain't a banshee, that's clear,” said he, “not a song did I hear—not a sigh—not the ghost of a moan. Faix, it must be, at the worst and sar-tainest, an evil sperrit.” And Michael hugged his arms across his chest, with the consolation of having, in that manner, banished it, and in his own mind favoured the salve regina more than any other prayer.

Michael mended his pace, for 'twas agreed that he should be one of the first comers to the wake, as he might help to set things in comely order before the arrival of the neighbours, and may be he was a little scathed by the apparition ; whether

he now made way so fast that he never  
red the walk tired him till he got to a turn  
oad; and there was a scene that took in a  
distance of the Turba-na-dhuv, or gloomy  
it's thrown, like a great frieze cloak, over  
county, and more; and just under, as it  
small wrinkle of the same, in similar  
ances with thousands whose families it  
nd covers, dwelt Mrs. Molony.

t must be the hut," shouted Michael,  
y the powers! it is a sure fact, they are  
the straw on which Mary lay, to tell her  
d neighbours to haste and wake her.  
and turf! never was there sitch a thing  
e world began," exclaimed Michael, upon  
a light that appeared more like a glow-  
han a rale fire; but he judged the great-  
he same by the distance, and sure enough  
blazing intimation to those that were near,  
acon to those far away.

! 'tis the death-howl I hear! they're  
all, they're a-calling all," said Michael,

taking to his heels, and running for the bare life of him. As he drew near, the death-howl that he thought he heard before, he now did really, and becoming plainer and plainer every stride he took ; when close upon the hut he joined in the chorus, with a voice as if uprising from the depths of the grave.

At his summons the people flocked from all sides, and every prospect was likely for a glorious wake.

The cabin door had been taken off its hinges for Mary's accommodation, and Mike was delighted to see her lying on it, dressed in her grave things, which were fair, white, and very fit. Three rale mould candles burned round her ; they were in spick-span new candlesticks, one at her feet, one at her right hand, the other on her left ; and indeed she looked so well and grand, that Michael became a little proud of the hand he had in all this.

He introduced himself to her uncles, and was already quite at home with them, when a quick

breathing in that quarter made him take a glance at the corpse, to see that all was right. He started upon beholding a face the image of Mary's, when she was at her best ; it belonged to a tall girl, who bent down over the body, like an angel of light over a mouldering child of death. Oh ! how cold and clammy did the cheek of Mary seem beneath that blossom of heaven's own rearing ! how livid and blue her lips, compared with the rose-leaves there ! Yet this girl's hair was so dark, her long lashes so gloomy, (though they sheltered a tint of the sky) and her eyebrows so black and arched, that Michael thought inwardly of a place from which spirits also came, and they are witching ones. But then again, her occupation belied his last notion, for she was wreathing a chaplet of everlasting flowers to adorn Mary's pale forehead.

"Who is she ?" asked Michael, and though they all knew who he meant, not one answered ; except a shake of their head, and a casting of their eyes behind them, as if to see whether anything

evil was near, could be called a satisfactory reply to Michael's plain and honest question. Of course he shrugged his shoulders, and was not less wise than before.

Thick as sparrows on a harvest day, uncles and cousins, grand aunts, and sisters' sons, and mothers' sons, now crowded near to pass their remarks upon the iligance of the corpse, and say comfortable things to the family. Called by the death-howl, they had brought benches and chairs, so that every one would have been soon at his ease ; but they all waited the priest's appearance before they seated themselves for the night ; nor did Father Flanagan keep them standing long, though he was old and walked with a stick, and his little withered wry legs did poor justice to the silk stockings. Yet he was a meek man, and one after their own heart, and could stoop, without *demaning* himself, to break an innocent joke with the lowest of them all, whom he called his children.

"And 'tis mighty proud I am to see yer

rivrence," said Mrs. Molony, curtseying low, and giving her duty to the homely father ; " and highly honoured does my mother's daughter feel, to have the likes of so great and goodly a saint to visit her in her distress, looking the pictur of the hale and hearty St. Patrick himself when he was just two-and-twenty, barrin a month. Sure 'tis a salve to my soul to see your worshipful here, in the very midst of yer own rightful born sons and daughters, dead and alive, who only pray their father may see good to sign his will, and make them heirs and heiresses of the fine things above and below."

This and more she said, and wiped with her check apron the only high-backed chair in the house (borrowed for the occasion). She prayed his reverence would condescend to accept the same, as an accommodation for the time being ; and though herself thought it clane enough for a prince, 'twas with bashfulness she would dare to offer a throne to Father Flanagan, whose bare touch hallowed everything.

When the priest was rested a little after his journey, he got up to set things in train for the night.

There were several plates of purification salt placed round the corpse ; these he blessed, and putting some of the salt into holy water, he went up to Mary's head, and repeating a long string of Latin words, made the sign of a cross upon her forehead ; he then sprinkled the rest with sanctified water, which, wherever it chanced to fall, left silver spangles there.

The cross on Mary's forehead shone brighter and was more justly wrought than the craftiest smith could make it ; this was the wonder and admiration of every one present, and Michael particularly remarked, that what fell on the nameless maiden's head, sparkled in her jet black hair with the same perfection, as did on her's, his lady Dermod's diamonds.

This struck Michael as an infallible token that his rivrence had a gift from heaven, and though I told him, salt and water drying would produce



effect any candle-light night, no way, nor  
could I persuade the lad that 'twas as  
as the trees waving when the wind blew.

and all present admired Mary with the  
jewel on her fair brow ; but not a soul of  
ave and except Michael, thought of bestow-  
kind look upon the dark-eyed girl, who  
Mary's temples so emblematically well :  
they all were more than shy of her, and  
isn't a word long enough to explain the  
they kept from the same, though they  
site intimate intirely with the corpse.

Flanagan took a taste of the poteen,  
l it to be passing good, and profiting  
recommendation, 'twas duly distributed  
t them.

were pipes and tobacco too in plenty, and  
of heart either to follow his rivirence's

st Michael, with the help of the spirits,  
o find himself warm ; and the old folks  
in his eyes to be following the smoke

from their pipes up the chimney. Some how or another too he discovered, he had left the bench on which he had been sitting, and was altogether at the far end of the hut—where sat by herself the dark-eyed maiden, but no longer alone, for Michael Beardon's very own arm encircled her waist. 'Twas mortal strange how he got there! and he could only account for it by something superhuman drawing him. She promised to accompany himself to the burying on the to-morrow; and Michael thought she was the *moral* of Mary, and after all would make a fitter wife for him. Upon this, he kissed her, while she looked so rosy and handsome that he could not help repeating the same action pretty loud and pretty often into the bargain; and though she tried and tried to get away, his hand was strong enough to hold her fast.

All this time her kith, kin, and allies had been talking of Mary's fine generous qualities and comely person, but Michael only heard a word

here, and a whisper there of it, for he was over-entertained to pay attention to everything.

He had missed the names of the great houses she had lived in, and was own maid to her lady always wherever she went. She had plenty of money, and kept her poor mother and the child her in easy circumstances till the death-sickness came over her, and she was obliged to leave her high station ; when she returned home to waste away out of the world. The time it held her below was more than a year, and though she longed to go to blessedness, she never complained of being obliged to part with her clothes, one after another, nor of the starvation-want that stared nakedly at her, when the last rag was gone. Mary took no pity on herself, but seeing her little brothers and sisters hadn't a mouthful, killed her faster.

Mrs. Molony here spoke up, and said, that only for the good, wise, and gracious Mr. Michael Cardon opening his rich bountiful hand, their neighbours and dear relations would not have had the pleasure of seeing so much of poor Mary left ;

and she made bould to insinase them that but for him they would not have enjoyed the grace after her death of so fine a wake. In course all eyes were turned upon Michael, who had passed unnoticed till then; and if they did gaze at him, it was in hysterics of admiration and wonderful awe, the worst fit of which he never inspired before, and didn't like now. But the priest smiled so *tinderly*, that Michael loved his lass more than ever, and hated the whole posse present with the exception of himself, her, and his rivirence, to the last of whom he thought of speaking as soon as he learnt from her own lips the maiden's name, before he could be able to couple it with his own in making a sociable proposition.

Michael was now called specially to hear something spoken very loud by Father Flanagan himself, which portended there would be a collection made for her family after mass had been said at Mary's berrin; and immediately upon this, some one asked whether Mary had been crossed in love.

As ill-luck would have it, Michael shouted out "that 'twas no fault of his if she was." Hardly had he said the word, when the unknown maiden sprang from him, darkened the door-way for a minute, and disappeared without. Michael tried to follow her, but he couldn't stand straight, or even do more, that is, walk. The wonderment of the assembly soon gave way to the greatest rejoicing on all sides; and now that the mysterious one was gone, they hugged Michael into the midst of them, and made him drink his own health and their's, every man of them, in the true poteen, till in self-preservation he was obliged to lie down on the flat of his back, and call them to witness that he wasn't drunk so long as, in that position, he could support himself from falling with both hands; and dead or alive, or on horse-back, they all allowed he hadn't his match for a steady lad and generous.

The priest had gone to sleep long ago, and I suppose the whole house besides did not stir much after Mike had been floored; however he

forgot everything, till bothered by the light of day that shone upon them, Michael rubbed his eyes (which were very hot) till they scalded again, and opened them mistily, to see as well as they might, a figure wrapped in a dark cloak enter the hut, and stepping light and stealthily over the snoring bodies that lay about everywhere, it approached Mrs. Molony, and waking her, they both began shrouding Mary, and placing the cold, silent bust of this once gay and sprightly one, in a real new, yet deadly hard coffin; they were as good as silent all the time; for Michael could only hear low murmuring-like whispers, with a sob now and then.

This saddest of all sad ceremonies was over; the closing from mortal view features a mother had doated down upon, and little brothers and sisters looked up to for a cheerful smile to help them on to good, or for pity, as they naughtily behaved, that penitent made the young creatures, when came a refreshing smile, like sunshine after

thunder:—thunder (mind ye) only meant to lighten the air.

The gilded lid being placed o'er her narrow berth, Mary's living friend, (the stranger) muffled close, repassed again; yet, pausing near Michael, the head stooped, as if to see through the folds of the hovel. He certainly heard a sigh, and then two burning tears fell on his bare hand. He guessed her secret; 'twas a woman, and she loved him, for the heat of the heart is tell-taled by the warmth of its dews.

Michael was going to wake outright, when the prettiest ankles and smallest feet in the world noiselessly and swiftly conveyed from the hut the vapoury form of his fancy's darling. Michael thought this must be the beginning of a dream, and turned himself to have it out.

Mrs. Molony, who had been listening to every sound, bestirred herself in rousing the people, as the roll of wheels, with the tramp of horses, sounded in her ears.

They were all soon up; but Michael was the

greater, not no less a person than the girl herself, her mantle too the same dream. Her shapely foot came into again, and Michael thought of those white toes that would do rings a power in setting them off. He took upon him that the jeweller in Limerick would fortune if he had in his window that tern her perfect shape; and why shouldn't the hair-dresser opposite take from nature; and discovering to naked comely parts, namely, the necks and sh counterfeited ladies and gentlemen, ensu of brown, red, and even grey wigs, which mighty fashionable on court days, towns and assize districts?

All the impatient compliments he tip of his tongue for the maiden's



particular hearing—that, like prisoners expecting to be liberated, were contriving to peep through the shiny bars of his teeth—Michael was obliged to swallow against his breath; for a chilly cold look, like judgment from her, bade them hie away to a dungeon, deeper and more damp and gloomy than that they had left a minute before.

Michael was ready to faint; for the love that had been stealing over him was just blazing, and her attempting to quench it threw all the smoke inside and nearly stifled him.

However, after a bit his pride got the better of his weakness, and those that knew Michael best believed that for Mary's honour he was wholly interested, and had nought else on earth to trouble his mind about; for they were deceived by his springy tread, and the clear fine voice that led the *willaloo*, rendered (unknown to them) more mournful and grand through the thoughts of his wrongs.

There was one other tongue that tuned it with Michael's, and now and again pitching higher,

fell into his metre ; as if the nightingale, in his song from a wind-ridden spray shaken, came down to finish his ditty near his love that sat low on her nest.

Dragging the hearse on slowly, the horses with their long dishevelled manes, and hanging heads, looked as sorrowful as they were black and dingy ; people gathered at every step, and a great cry was *ris*. Yet Michael's voice and her's of the dark mantle (different from the rest) were distinctly heard above all. Each passing stranger contributed his or her lamentations, yet could not be hidden the wildest or softest notes of these two matched yet matchless ones. Along the Turba-na-dhuv the stream of voices rolled ; now in the glen of the cradle bubbled softly, and again boldly dashing their last volume, seemed to fall in light spray, till lost in the ravine deep below. Suddenly there rose a scream, as of the last bird of night, and fragments fell from the rocks at the dismal reverberation. Each attendant of the bier trembled, for well

they kenned that knell. Silent was every tongue ; and the heavy tread of the horses alone kept time with her *caoine*. In a flame-coloured cloak, that hid her every feature, stalked and ran, rather than walked, a women of great stature and slighness ; she came from a hollow cave whose mouth was sheltered by the mountain torrent's flow. As its foam rested on her head, the people thought that the harbinger of a storm ; she alighted from a murky cloud, bringing its mists as an earnest of her powers with her.

She held hay to the horses' mouths, and they snorted, yet took the offered good. " Things of a kindred clime," remarked the village school-master, in Michael's ear, as, pushed on by the rest, aghast they strode together.

Now, piercing the skies, was sent the highest and wildest cry that ever rose over mortal's bier. It was of that lone woman's might ; and to the nameless maiden's cheek, as it lighted up with unearthly fires, the wondering, admiring, bewildered eyes of Michael turned.

He felt a tap on his shoulder—he stood still—the hearse and its crowd passed on—and Michael found himself alone in a thicket of forest trees. Swaying in the wind, their heavy heads sent forth sighs that filled the air with sadness. Michael raised his head to catch health from the breeze, though its dirge rung dolefully in his ear; and a chill came over his frame, as he met the blank marble gaze of the sunken-eyed as hollow-tongued spirit of the place. A gaunt, fleshless arm held her cowl aloft, revealing her whole horror. From those features' deep purple, and distorted by gashes, hung large drips of unwholesome damp, that clung to the rags they fell upon.

Neither ghost nor spectre awed him like that sight. Impatient fear strung his words together, and he asked her business with him. Returning a fiendish grimace, she echoed his words; the lad trembled from head to foot, and bending down to his height (an arch of darkness all hideous and terrible!) she whispered, in a sound like the sea gurgling over the shallows: "When

stillness is felt, and the sun is at roost, you'll meet me to-night ;" and a stream of blood flowed from her mouth upon the fearful youth.

Sickened, he reeled and fell to the ground; but when he recovered, nothing was to be seen of his spectral mistress, save a red track, that showed her life must have nigh spent itself near him.

Michael joined the mourners as they mounted the lime-stone crags over against St. Augustine's, that, low crumbling, lay midst its own gloomy vaults and white ruins, like a grey jackdaw dying.

In the old ancient chapel yard, where her people had been buried time out of mind, there mass was solemnized, and Mary was lowered to her earth. Michael turned his pockets inside out over the receiving plate, and a rich collection, they say, he helped to make for the widowed mother and her long family.

The stars had mounted guard over the grassy grave-quilt before Michael left Mary's cold pillow.

With a faltering step he approached the cascade, whither the woman had pointed as their place of meeting.

Michael gazed thoughtfully into its troubled waves ; and the raging surf had already drenched him to the skin, when a large bony hand was passed through the falling waters, and after beckoning for some time, to his utter dismay at the preternatural appearance, two long bony fingers, hooking in his vestment, drew the stricken swim within a vast low cavern. For a moment his breath left him ; but the next he felt, he saw, he was in the habitation of the Witch of the Cairn—a place whispered of by mothers to babes on their knees—regarded by school-boys as the region of torment—considered by young men as an evil one's nest—and spoken of by old men never without a shaking of the hoary head, and a solemn ejaculation to their guardian angel.

A thin candle, stuck upon a piece of sharp rock, made the place seem more mysteriously gloomy, through its dim light ; and strange and ghastly as

falling on her had kindled into a fever  
park of life, changing the whole expres-  
sion of nature's ugliness. Her face, scorched  
, seemed burning still where those eyes  
d from every deep rent a red blaze  
s if it were ready to issue. Her hair  
with filth, and hueless, hung as those  
reeds do that garland tombstones.

as he was, the first thing that came into  
his head, (for he knew *she* could tell any-  
one saw events before they came) was to  
her upon the meaning of the apparition  
three rods of flame that he met on the  
the cradle.

on the day was full old you saw it," she  
and were you a man without a craven's



the pathway, and upon which he must tread if he moved a step further into the cave.

"What! do you falter?" she cried, and with irresistible force and fury drew Michael, stumbling over it, and seating him roughly on the ground, she brandished a huge iron pronged fork, that might seem to answer the purpose of tearing flesh from dead bones.

"Look here!" she shouted; and succeeding peals of hellish triumph burst from the cavern cells, and rung upon Michael's ears.

"Look here!" again she yelled, and again from the depths deep echoes came, as of demons there rattling their chains in glee.

"Hush!" she whispered, "I have not long to stay here, and would employ my time. Listen, bold youth! and shudder awhile. Know ye whither I am bound to-night? The sun to his cradle—the mole to his burrow—and Jude to the father of poison! Will ye with me?" she screamed, and thrust the ponderous weapon close to his side.



Michael was a bold man ; yet the suddenness of the action took him so unawares, that in bodily fear he shouted to the top of his lungs : " Hist ! stay a little longer ! "

" Yea," she replied, " you would get more seasoned for the heat of his forge. For that respite, on bended knee, by all you hold most dear, swear to me you will, as long as life shall last, oppose the world's tainting sneer and slandering tongue—dry the orphan's tears—supply the beggar's want—and cheer the bereaved one's heart ! "

" I swear," said Michael, glad to have his life upon such easy terms ; he rose quickly to his feet, but was not then so tall by a giant's span as her of the Cairn.

" Remember every word you here have vowed, remember every syllable," she said, shaking her clenched fist in Michael's face. " Remember ! " again and more distinctly she uttered, " or a bloody ghost shall haunt thy waking as thy dreaming hours ; and if from the side of the

friendless thou dost wander, death shall surely follow thee, and cursed shall thy children be !”

Having said this, she became more calm, and taking Michael’s arm drew him towards her.

“Though you shudder when you gaze upon me, and disgust fills you mind, know, young man ! know that these features were once beautiful, this countenance faultless. I was betrothed to one of thy sex, he deceived me, and married my sister. We brought him a daughter each. Mine was the eldest—a child without a name ; Mary (the girl ye buried to-day) was the other. When I found the sole witness of my weak reliance would soon make my shame known to the world, by taking vengeance on beauty I once had pride in, I determined they should never identify the witch of the Cairn with Judy that erred. Gunpowder was a handy helpmate. With it I fled from the haunts of men. I did the deed ; and till now, fast has my secret held.

“I gloried in the deception I had achieved, yet hated mankind for the marked expressions of their loathing.

was always hired by the undertakers as a *coiner*; and, muffled close, full oft I led my enemies to the tomb. Never, oh did I earn my pay so well as when he he who mocked my name and woman's !

burst a blood-vessel that very then. To child was graved—her who came between a poor girl and my spotless fame. Four go I broke my heart-strings in my second—that one of his was swept away. Still lowest not the height of my triumph,” the exclaimed, flinging Michael from her with which sent him rolling amongst the that strewed the path-way. “There it screamed, kicking the empty skull with red feet. “He was hardly cold,” she said, “when I dug him from the earth, and that head from the trunk, and with ing fork,” she said, kissing it, “I tore the m its jaws. It made me a tidy ornament rawing-room, and a speechless companion ; gloomy mood.”

Then, with a shout, she leaped into the air, and dancing round the skull, sang fiendish melodies, that made Michael feel as if all the tribes of darkness and sin were jingling their shackles above, below, and around him.

With every word the blood came gurgling up her throat. This seemed to tame her at last, for sitting down quietly by Michael, the woman showed him how that Judy, her daughter, tended the hearse-cattle, which was a great fortune to them, as no one else could be found, far or near, above ground or below, to do the like for creatures used to such dismal tricks ; and, grinding her teeth, she told of her girl and Mary having a strange, unnatural liking for each other, which now, she hoped, was blasted to all eternity.

Here a light figure broke through the liquid fleece, and Judy herself bent down to embrace her mother.

She saw Michael, and, falling in a sudden faint, was caught in his arms.

“ I knew it—she loves you, Michael Reardon ;

deceive her, and the weightiest curse of the dying shall crush you! Place her first and most favoured of woman in thy manly breast, and thy vow is kept."

Michael hugged the pale maiden, and promised to cherish her till death *and afterwards*, if she would only get so pale and lovely whenever he was going to forget his pearl.

Now the witch of the Cairn began to gasp for breath, and those parts of her face which had been red before became a deadly blue. She seized Michael's wrist, which, grasping with agonising force, she let fall, strained and feeble by his side.

"Leave me now," she slowly muttered, "yet not without a token between us; that token thy dearest treasure shall be."

"My watch," said Michael, writhing with pain and catching at his safest pocket. "'Tis gone, 'tis lost," he howled, and tears stood in his eyes.

"Even so, young man!" the withered witch

replied; "hearken to me: keep my secret as thou wouldst have kept thy watch; but woe betide thee shouldst thou let it e'en be wrested from thee. Mark my words: as surely as thou shalt find thy mother's gift in honest charge, and going—so shalt thou find the wife of thy choice, bright in feature as the polished watch-dial, and true as the works that guide the hands. Be-gone!"

Michael did not wait to hear the word again; but resting the maiden's head softly on his stable boy's cap, (which he relinquished to her use) bare-pated and scared he fled from the Cairn, and after a heavy run over mountain and moor, never stopped till he arrived at the top of the second flight of stairs in the tower chambers at Carrig-vhair.

He fell against the door exhausted, and I, in a hurry and wonder, opened it. After begging for a trifle to drink himself steady, he came to, and in the openness of his heart described to me every word of what I am showing you, exhibiting

his wrist as a proof of its truth ; and verily the smartest bracelet never fitted so close as that wraith-stain, which clung to Michael's arm till the hour of his death.

The very next day, when out walking with the children, I met a poor girl wringing her hands in utter distraction, who told me she was friendless and desolate, the only relation she had upon earth having been last seen by her standing on the rim of the bason called the 'Devil's Punch-bowl,' an eternally deep lake at the top of the great mountain that sheltered the Cairn. She knew 'twas her mother by her red mantle, but when she reached the black fountain, not the sign of a creature was there.

Having a notion who this might be, (for she was very handsome) I took her home with me and called Michael, who had just been to the priest's, and recovered his watch ; which was picked up near St. Augustine's, by a sturdy farmer those parts, who found it just running down, and winding it, took the same to his rividence,

who was to publish this foundling in the chapel next mass, and discover the owner that way, if he did not come forward before.

Finding his watch going specially delighted Michael, who never could bear it to stop; as while it ticked he still thought he heard his old mother's heart beating alive.

When he knew from me her story, and before he saw the girl, back again to the priest's Michael speeds; and returning in the twinkling of a star, caught Judy round the waist, wiped her eyes, and kissing her bravely, read the licence for their marriage, for which he had paid the money down, as it was no manner of use having them asked in chapel, Judy owning no real surname, or having a single friend but him in the world. So the following morning they were made man and wife. Judy's dowry was a purse, rich with the *caoine*-money she and her mother had earned, which proved a great lift to them, as every farthing of Michael's wages had gone for charity and the licence.



in the evening of their wedding-day, went to litter down Cruishkeen for the and lo ! and behold ! the fine noble ani-stiff-dead in his stall !

el *ris* the house, but it was all to no use ; not be brought back any how, and 'twas r Michael had a new wife to turn to, or have gone wild that same hour.

orse-leech declared Cruishkeen died of the staggers ; but all the other servants was a mark of ill luck for bringing Judy airn into their family. Any how 'twas a oken that a member of the house should each looked at the other to know which could be meant.

r was away on a visit of a few days, and ress, being tired, had the house shut up. an usual. Every thing was silent, and had gone to sleep in the turret chamber, out twelve o'clock, a moonbeam shone the port-hole and fell upon his eyes. At moment a dismal wailing rent his ears,

and Michael started from his bed, and thrusting his head through the opening, listened breathless.

All the glorious night-lamps shone upon the tower; and as Michael looked from its topmost height down on those rugged sides, the usually black ivy seemed for once like scales of fretted silver, armouring the grim giant, and through the rifted battlements, like sinews, the twining branches came.

Presently the voice, wildly singing, was heard again. Michael beheld a slender form, wrapped all in white, flit round the green lawn at the tower's base. Now and again she was lost in the trees; but, emerging full soon, moved to the tune of her voice, keeping the same eternal circle.

“ 'Tis the banshee ! ” he whispered to himself.

This had hardly passed in his thoughts, when a noise in the stable-yard was heard, and with a long last cry the banshee started through the woods, and over the waters, like a thing of light, growing fainter in the distance.

Her song died away on the night-wind, and Michael was left in sadness and boding.

The noise in the stable-yard increased, and the kennelled hounds gave tongue, baying as they had never done before.

To know the cause of this, (leaving his beautiful bride still sleeping) Michael descended the tower-stairs and made for the mews. He arrived there in time to assist Mr. Dermod from the carriage. The master had travelled in great haste, and his first words to Michael were: "Tell me, how is your mistress? has anything gone wrong here? I would know it immediately."

Michael told of Cruishkeen; and when he began about the banshee, Mr. Dermod grew as pale as the moon above him. He heard Michael from first to last, and then said: "'Twas the white lady who pointed me hither to-night—there a pall over my house from this hour!"

The warm tears trembled in Nelly's eyes, and her voice fell like the last cadence of a funeral bell as she concluded.

Finding my mistress in good health, and to account for his unexpected return, master told her of the banshee; she laughed at his superstitious fears; and three days afterwards lay a corpse in that very tower!

The dark Judy cooined for her 'tis true; but it followed that this mysterious one's breath blighted his and limb wherever she came!

Meteor, who had lain still from the moment of their entrance, suddenly started up, barking violently. The cousins, clinging to each other, almost fainted from the shock. Nelly, more calm, chided their timidity, whilst she embraced them both, remarking, "that it was not Meteor's wont to greet Power so roughly."

But it was evident the dog thought of no such welcome visitor; for he walked round the room, with the fur erect upon his back, to the infinite terror of Mary, who began thinking that the presence of something supernatural, as yet hidden from them, might disturb them.

At length, uttering a long, deep growl, he lay

down as if satisfied that the danger was over; when again distant footsteps and knocking roused his hottest ire, and he clamoured hoarsely. Between his breathing pauses, a gentle, low terrified voice begged admittance.

"'Tis a benighted wanderer—one of our own sex, my dears; help your own crazy nurse, ma colleen, to aid her."

Without the tempest raged fearfully, and shuddering groans came borne on the air, seeming to touch the very heart of Meteor, who now cowered before his mistress.

Edith, pale and trembling, drew back the bolts—the lightning flashing in one bright halo folded her, and thunder rolled over the little cot. Another moment the door was freed, and bursting widely open, flung the young girl against the shaken dresser.

A figure, muffled in deep coloured garments, rushed to her assistance; but Meteor, rearing, placed his fore paws on the stranger's breast, and with a menacing growl, forbade such interference.

ends of a rosary fell numbered between  
ten.

lark, and graceful she rose before them,  
each with admiration and awe.

ry the story of Judy of the Cairn seemed  
aged, as the foreign accent and remark-  
ty of the stranger surrounded her with

s one of those lofty-browed, black-haired  
whom to look upon is to worship. The  
t could remain barred against her must  
than steel-bound. Prince and peasant  
v at her command !

with the lantern, soon made his appear-  
d, enveloped in various wraps, the  
ide Nelly an affectionate farewell. With  
nbrace and many tears, Nelly parted  
darling, and sending a blessing after her  
rain-teeming porch, she once more shut  
out, and turned with kind though sor-  
e to her new inmates.

## CHAPTER X.

Who could blame had I loved that face,  
 Ere my eye could twice explore her?  
 Yet it is for the fairy intelligence there,  
 And her warm, warm heart I adore her.

C. WOLF

The sun rose with that brilliancy so peculiar—  
 refreshing after a season of tempest and gloom—  
 The heavens purified, reflected his glory around,  
 and all nature presented meet offerings to her  
 king. The wood pigeon's soft cooing, and the  
 lark's ærial minstrelsy, the sheep's low bleating,  
 and shepherd-boy's lay, the peacock's wild  
 caoine, and chanticleer's bell, mingled with the  
 incense of spring's youngest flowers, ascended

...listening, greeted their play-mate and rejoiced with the rest.

...was the morning when our heroine and ... Mary took their departure from

To avoid a painful scene at parting, ... he rode beside the carriage which was to ... be the last hope of his house from her ... eyes. Their road leading through the ... noise of wheels at that early hour ... he hares who pastured abroad; lowering ... and erecting the other like a sail before ... he fled timidly some paces, then sat to ... the cavalcade, and again bounding were ... spreading fern. The gaudy pheasant ... along the covers, signaling to their



worm, and attaining an equal height a few feet further, warble forth a love ditty to his mate, bowing his proud little head and ruddy breast the early party, with a tinkling twitter hie to another spot.

All these trifling incidents on their way, Mr. Leslie was solicitous in remarking to Edith, as they assisted in banishing thoughts of solitude from his own mind, and raising his child's spirits, which he saw ill agreed with the happiness around them.

They had never been separated before, and Edith was very sad. Once and twice during the first stage she called to the postilion to turn back, when her father, riding to the window, and gently chiding, countermanded the order.

A long moment passed, and he came not—another and another; Edith strained her head from the window and saw him galloping homewards. It was with the greatest difficulty Mary could prevent her leaping from the carriage. By exerting her powers of argument, and blending

earnest entreaties with mild reproofs, she at length prevailed upon Edith's submission, and the young girl, burying her face in Mary's bosom, found a friend, and felt comforted.

Stage after stage as the travelling equipage drew up with a crashing halt at the principal hotels in each post-town, immediately Power's voice was heard, highest and most commanding amongst the numerous by-standers, including grooms and idlers, who all busied themselves in tackling two tame animals to the vehicle. When this was done, and he had paid the fare, this important functionary usually opened the carriage-door, and with the most deferential bow presented Mrs. Hipps' duty to the ladies, and wished to know whether they were well. Having acknowledged the answer, he mounted the rumble, and thrusting his hands into his great-coat pockets, issued a steutorian "all's right," upon which the descending lash stimulating the horses to an instant gallop, men and houses were soon left behind.

Power duly delivered the ladies' reply to the maid, and sinking his mouth into the folds of the shawl that enveloped his neck, slept soundly.

Slightly sketching the scenes before them, Mary beguiled the time, and by entering minute particulars of her favourite haunts interested Edith in the country they were about to enter.

Edith remarked that Mary's relatives had hardly mentioned in her details, and involuntarily drew nearer her cousin, feeling that Mary neglected in her friendship most who had never tasted this honey distilled from its proper fountains.

Once more a sudden stop interrupted the cousins' conversation; the carriage stood at the door of one of the best hotels they had yet seen; its official landlord already had his hand upon the door to inquire whether the travellers needed refreshment, when Power's presence arrested his attention, turning to the old servant with marked respect. The two both disappeared through the ranks of chambermaids, waiters, and tap-room companions, and

several interests and curiosity had been awakened by the musical wheels of a travelling chariot.

Shunning the vulgar gaze, Edith and Mary leaned backwards, speculating upon Power's probable objects in leaving them, and wondering why no fresh horses were brought, and pitying the reeking cattle who had just been unchained from the pole, that, crest-fallen and stiff, their tails shaking and limbs trembling, followed each other down the narrow alley leading to their dimly lighted resting-place.

'Twas not long before Power returned, who, unfolding the steps, intimated, with profound reverence, his wish that the young ladies should alight.

Accompanied by Hipps, and followed closely by Power, (who in a short space of time had locked up and made all things secure about the carriage) Edith and Mary were shown by the landlord of the Great White Hart into his best private parlour—a large low room, whose furthest recesses shone with the glow of a blazing fire,

that noised in the ample chimney like a furnace, and warmed the whole frame merely through looking upon it.

A lengthy table was spread for the mid-day repast; and while Power attended to its arrangements, Edith amused herself by inspecting the ornaments on the high chimney-piece—things quite novel to the young traveller; such as fire-screens painted in birds, fruits, and flowers of brightest hues; perforated card-baskets, decorated with bows of gay-coloured ribands, with curiously twisted spills of tinted papers—doubtless the works of mine host's daughters, the results of their school-days' application. Perhaps the very one whose fairy fingers reached the foaming tankard to each thirsty customer, and exulted in the distinction of bar-maid, had contributed her share of taste to these embellishments; as her proficiency in its exercise was marked by the gold combs that adjusted long, inconvenient ringlets of paley hair, and the many fantastic loops and braids that confined its profusion behind.

Having allowed what he considered adequate time for their refreshment, the systematic old soldier, Power, again presented himself with a military salute to the ladies, and warned them of the readiness of horses and postilion to convey them another stage or two as might be before night-fall. He deliberately stated having settled the bill for their luncheon, his own crust of bread, rind of cheese and drap o' beer, and terminated by declaring that nothing but stones now lay in the way of their coach wheels.

Thus, day after day, were their travelling and seasons of repose arranged; Power, by his prudence and foresight, fully justifying the confidence his master had placed in him. With proud dignity he supported the interests of his young charge, and disbursed their monies.

"Is this the park? are those the cliffs? how near are we now?" eagerly inquired Edith, as they drew towards the residence of her aunt.

"Not far off, my dear," Mary replied; "do

you see yonder white rocks? the hinges of great gates moan in those sepulchres.

Edith started at the cold melancholy remark, and Mary turned her face away; excessive paleness should alarm her cousin; the poor girl felt really ill. She was returning after three long years of absence from home: not with joy she looked forward to holding the well-remembered faces of her earthly relatives, but with a vague dread approached; not because now, for the first time, she was painfully aware of their slight regard for her, but because she was apprehensive for her beloved Edith's — Edith, the guileless, the tender, the unworldly, who in the profound mysteries of worldly politics would she meet stormy billows for the first time, rolling near the pure seclusion of her little home; her mother, who had invited Edith, knew not of the admirable symmetry in mind and body of her niece, whom she regarded as a child; her father, her companion for her younger daughter, and who

not possibly interfere with Emma's superior charms.

"A good omen, a sure one!" exclaimed Mary, pointing upwards to the sky: a bright flush of hope irradiated her cheek; and Edith joined her raptures with ecstasy.

A noble eagle soared aloft, his spreading pinions golden-dyed with the glory he caught from the sun above. Higher—higher—higher— aspiring to an eyrie there, the bird of might ascends!

So profound was their attention, that neither perceived the motion of the carriage had ceased; until an ungloved hand placed upon her arm, as it rested on the window-panel, caused Mary to shrink from the pressure, and a gentleman's voice, in musical accents, exclaimed: "Have you quite forgotten friends of auld lang syne, with all other sublunary things?"

Her eyes met those of the speaker, and both blushed deeply.

"Miss Mary de Winter, I am come to welcome



you," he continued; "I was on my way to join Frederick at the brook with some fishing tackle, when your mamma and sister overtook me. They were riding to pay a visit in the neighbourhood. I thought you were expected, and asked whether this was not the day. Lady Hester told me, she had left orders with the housekeeper to take care of you till her return; when I thought my services might be of some slight assistance to the way-worn; so, have been looking for you this hour or two. Had I breath for a running footman, you should have my company along the avenue; but as this fails me, when most needed, I hope you will excuse my taking a shorter route across the park, and meeting you on the threshold in time to do my devoir for your happiness."

With this remark the young man raised his hat from his head, and wishing Mary a brief adieu, clambered the rocks that walled the entrance and disappeared behind their ridge.

Two gigantic columns of granite stood on either side the gates, shaped like winding sheets, from

which the body had risen, and left standing all erect and stiff, their cavern-folds wrapping the dim bolts of those frowning portals.

Wide open now the iron barrier grates, disclosing to more perfect view the rustic lodge, whose shingly roof, supported by poles of pine, (its undressed condition and scaly bark suiting well with the wild harmony of the scene) presented at its porch the warder—a matron attired in the full costume of her country, and as clean as the snow that clad the hills.

“I am glad to see you looking so well, Winifred,” remarked Mary to the woman as they passed. “Yea, sure, an’ ’tis a spoonful of goat’s whey, and a bite of fresh air, will make my young leddy as blithe as ever. Good ye always were, or be bound, Wining wouldn’t say the word.”

Mary relapsed into a reverie, leaving Edith for the remainder of her ride to applaud alone the varied scenery.

The avenue led through a defile well calculated to inspire admiration and awe. Precipitous rocks

ress) rose in the sunlight, as one stern  
g object in that vast beauty.

it stood, perched upon an angular rock,  
ectling brow, of a paley hue, gave its  
o a name suiting the castellated mansion,  
tirely of the stone that formed its base.  
e invaded its sterile bounds, save the  
hawthorn and brindled furze scaling the  
s, and the wall-flower (desolation's pre-  
) bloomed on the turrets.

venue wound towards a ruined keep, that,  
with ivy, formed a picturesque addition to  
e, and gave an air of ancient grandeur to  
ess—a dignity which belonged to the de  
of memory gone by.

was so entranced by the scene before her  
heeded not Mary's abstraction, till the  
nity to the castle changed the current of  
ghts.

rank with timidity from the new world  
ening before her, and, falling back on  
aved a sigh that awoke her cousin to the

memory of the reflections she had made within the same hour.

With a feverish, anxious solicitude Mary spoke of her papa, and how glad he would be to see them. "She knew where he was always to be found at the same hour; he was surely in the library, reading the births, marriages, and deaths in the Morning Herald, which he took the evening to reflect upon. Her mamma would soon return, she was very certain, and there—there was Edgar—Captain Levison, true to his word, waiting to hand them from the carriage."

Edith secretly rejoiced in the absence of her aunt, upon whom she thought with a vague awe, that she was unwilling either to disturb or have confirmed; and she begged of Mary (unless he were already aware of it) not to warn Mr. Jones of their arrival, until they should be a little, a very little, rested.

Ceding to her wishes, with an half-reluctant air, yet really relieved, Mary, apologizing a great many times, and with evident embarrassment, for

omitting this politeness at first, introduced her cousin to Captain Levison, who, struck with Edith's appearance, now conscious for the first time of her extreme beauty, stammered forth innumerable welcomes in the name of his hostess, who had deputed him to bear her excuses to Miss Lealie; who, he believed, upon this occasion, made her first visit to Gwyn Dinas; and hoping the journey thither, through such a lovely country, had rather interested than fatigued her.

Nervous at being the object of so much attention, Edith gladly dispensed with his attendance, at the foot of the staircase, and leading, rather than being guided by Mary and the housekeeper, she found herself in the chamber destined for her occupation; and Mary, she rejoiced to learn, was to be her companion by night as well as by day.

This arrangement made both happy, as each dreaded a separation from the only friend they both seemed to have in that wide house.

Her bonnet and mantle thrown aside, Edith reclined upon her couch, in a state between abstraction to the part she must act in the scenes about to be disclosed, and attention to every sound and sight presented to her senses.

Mary had unpacked in her presence her largest school portmanteau, and the little ditto had undergone the same process at the hands of a maid-servant; both had been carried from the chamber by the same attendant, and a disjointed conversation continued between Mary and her maid, odd pauses occurring ever and anon, in the room of answers expected from Edith's questioners; still she lay, silent yet intent. Sundry articles of her own dress had been carefully placed in a wardrobe; she regarded the order in which they were laid with seeming interest, and saw the folding-doors closed, the drawers shut one after another, the daylight wane, and Hipps, after placing lights, disappear at a summons to tea in the servant's hall, and in obedience to a nod of

Edith was presently unconscious of having been seen.

The glass being opposite, and Mary sitting at her dressing-table with her back towards the door, Edith watched the reflection of her cousin's countenance, with eager attention to the placing of every single hair that escaped the simple smooth plait Mary loved to wind herself. Her cousin's cheek was flushed, and she looked better than usual; nervous anxiety was evident in her eyes, and Edith began to think what could be the reason for Mary taking such pains with her adorning. She remembered such sentences as these: "I heard say, ma'am, that Lady Hester had brought company from the *Pentré*."

"Oh! those particular Misses Macklin! One is quite a blue, Edith; does not that frighten you? Miss Elfrida Macklin will try me back over my whole school term, and spoil a bad evening by propounding my deficiencies. Mamma is too much engaged with her dear Dorothy, looking over the benefit her health has received

He professed to be fond of children and used to play with me when a little girl ; though he was quite a tall youth then. Emma was in the habit of quizzing him very much for his juvenile taste, and applied to him the sobriquet of 'the long boy.' He has not grown a bit since, but yet he is much altered. I think it may be for the better, as Emma says, but he was considered very pretty as a youth. He is nearly my sister's age—she will have it he's older. I wonder where Emma is all this while ; she must be unavoidably occupied, or she would come to welcome you, Edith !—for three whole years I have not seen my sister—I wonder does she think it half a century."

A long silence, only disturbed by the fall of a pin from the dressing-table, or the floating of a ribbon attached to some part of Mary's dress, enabled Edith to arrange these sentences in her mind. Hushed by the stillness, she began to fancy herself dreaming, and had just dropped her eyelids, when the dinner-bell's impatient peal caused her to start to a sitting posture ; and Mary,



Long before she expected, a hurried step was heard without; the door opened, and Mary, springing forward, received on her forehead a kiss from her sister. This was colder than usual, and the blood rushing back to her heart, left Mary pale and corpse-like.

"I think you have grown a little taller, you are thinner too, and as white as usual! I shall have time enough to look at you however. But where is this wonderful cousin of ours?" she added, gazing inquisitively round. "Captain Levison does nothing but talk of her nose, eyes, hair, mouth, teeth, &c. &c. One would think he had been seven years in her company, so conversant is he with her points; and presuming upon her amiability, forsooth, withal he concludes there is a likeness between you both—a family likeness I dare infer, or (as Miss Elfrida Macklin would say) you make two in a class or an order, as the pica, or pie-kind among birds, where parrots and ravens are associated."

"Indeed, indeed, Emma, she has not a feature

in her face like mine; she is too beautiful; how Edgar could fancy a similarity I know He must have been jesting."

Mary's colour came again, and she hung her head as if she remembered having done some wrong.

"Once for all, let me beg of you, Miss Mary, not to call Captain Levison, Edgar. He is no longer a boy, and you must remember you are not quite a baby now."

"I forgot, do forgive me, sister! hush! we shall awake her."

"Is she gone to bed then already? Come, turn on the light—let us see this phoenix—or it might be more appropriate."

Mary, placing her hand before the candle, looked it over the sleeper; exultingly she watched her unguarded admiration depicted in her countenance, and "Isn't she lovely?" burst from her lips, with a smile that gave tenfold to her meaning.

"You'll wake her outright with your

replied Emma ; " there, that will do—you may set the candle down."

Shamed into a little feeling by Mary's acquiescing gentleness of deportment, Emma exclaimed: " You're as tame as ever, I see ; come along, ma petite, we'll descend ;" and giving her arm to Mary, they left Edith with her beauty and charms, which Nelly used to say, when she was a baby, " must be very fine, behind such a sweet veil."

" And how is my child ?" cried Lady Hester, throwing her arms round her daughter's neck, more gracefully than lovingly: " my dear ! I am entranced to see you home again, and looking—positively rosy !"

" Devonshire air agrees with Miss Mary, Lady Hester," said Captain Levison, again presenting his hand to the young lady.

" I thought you had seen my sister before !"

" You are right, Miss de Winter," replied the soldier, now blushing in his turn ; but the fairy queen gave me no opportunity of seeing or serving

her, though I came quite out of my way to be the first to welcome my little play-mate.

No sooner had I assisted her from the carriage, than she vanished; nor appeared again till here opposed to me in her mother's soft embrace.

"So Frederick turns and turns his sentences," said Emma aside; "how long have you been Frederick's pupil, colonel," she continued, laughing and bowing. "I perceive the ether that overcame our soldier's senses obscured his vision for common objects; she is very pretty, Captain Edgar Levison, and I give you great credit for your discernment."

"When Miss Mary de Winter's eyes are disenchanted, I shall be happy to attract their notice," said the sharp shrill voice of a thin elderly lady behind a large fan.

"Miss Macklin," exclaimed Mary, breaking from the circle, as shocked by electricity, "I did not see you; 'tis so dark—so dazzling, I mean, coming upon lights suddenly, after treading that gloomy winding passage leading from my room -

I hope, I trust you will receive my apologies, and believe I did not intend the remotest rudeness, but beg your pardon sincerely, for any apparent neglect."

"What (in the name of all the constellations, Ursa Major with the little Bear and Pegasus,) can make you, child, so lugubriously civil? *Faire sans dire* is my motto; so having placed your apologies in apogee, divest yourself of all trifling objects, and explain to me the mechanical principle of the orrery lately exhibited at Cheltenham. I call astronomy my science, and delight in every means that elucidates the subject. To assist you in forming the diagram, consider me the sun, yourself the earth, that vase on the pier-table your moon, our company the planets; let us speculate upon their attendant satellites; the fixed stars we suppose without this radius, or obacured."

"In the clouds, I declare," exclaimed Frederick de Winter. "How do you do? at home again, my tiny Minny? O! that may not interrupt

the centrifugal force which detains you in your sphere, I'll put out the sun, or in orthodox terms, eclipse you, by passing between it and kissing the earth. There," said Frederick, after saluting his sister, and with a patronizing air, "you are welcome at Blanche Castle, tidy dear!"

Mary had risen upon the approach of another person, and stood—her lips apart—as if to speak a kind greeting, when the words and action of the party arrested their motion.

"The last fashion, I see," cried Miss Dorothea Macklin—a little lady, in a high turban, with long ends, who held Mary at a distance from her with one hand, while with the other she lifted a ponderous pair of spectacles to her eyes. Mary was not compelled to maintain her position so long as she at first expected, as Miss Dorothea's scissors that, with her pincushion, hung on the same huge silver chain, had got entangled in the spectacles, and rode carelessly across the bridge of her nose, confounding the direction of her visual organs.

A titter from the circle, and a subdued smile from the victim, irritated the old lady, and she pushed Mary from her, saying: "Your school-girl's heads are stuffed with ribbons and lace, and bubble-and-squeak romances."

"Verily, yea," quoth Frederick, "where heroes of battle, flood and flame wondrous seem, and ladies celestial *always* are."

"True indeed you say, boy! Neither wrinkles or crinkles are to be found in those books."

"Except where the leaves are turned down, *finds* Dorothy."

Like school-boy's ears, Master Frederick," concluded Miss Elfrida Macklin.

The young man to whom this was addressed, turned down the heel of his shoe, just remembering it pinched him; and drawing up his shirt-collar, adjusted his head in his neck-cloth, combing out of knots, with his fingers, the thin sandy whiskers of a fair pale dissipated looking face. He dared not touch his love-locks, which he wore

long, to conceal the defect alluded to, lest Miss Macklin should enjoy his defect too much.

"Go, coo to papa, miss Minny. Don't you hear him piping to his doveling?"

Without waiting a second hint from Frederick, Mary leaped over a small footstool, and hastening to her father, gave and received the warmest caress that evening had witnessed.

"How is the dear, dear gout?" she repeated, observing that he nursed one leg, which from constant suffering he had acquired the habit of laying athwart his knee, and sheltering from accidental blows and bruises with both hands.

"As well, aye better than this time six-and-thirty years ago, when I first paid court to my Lady Hester. We had a merry-go-round waltz that night, and she finished the ball by accepting me. Don't you see the fine lady was caught by my dancing, and refused Captain Donald Mac Swain, with all the weight about him in the scales of his helmet, for the well-balanced ballast of Jaques Jones Jenkins—myself!"



The voice of his wife calling him to order subdued to a whisper the last part of this boast, her father's good humour taking another turn, yet more oppressive to Mary individually. "No longer my little bantam, but hopped into sacks, I declare; I think I must call you my fan-tail."

"Oh, hush! papa, do hush!"

"Well, I won't say any more about the bantam. Does cousin wear ban——? No, if I recollect right her mother was too tender and delicate for anything of that sort. A sweet creature her mother was! Could not think of making half a boy of her girl. You were such a poppet in bantams! They were frilled so nattily above your little feet and the short slip over finished my dancing dolly. I don't think her mamma has been so fond of her since she doffed the —— and turned up her hair. Captain Levison you remember Mary in ban——."

"Father, father!" exclaimed Mary, placing her hand over his mouth and looking the picture of dismay.

"Why, child, I can't answer you, if you cork me so tight; you let me do nothing but froth." He concluded with an asthmatic cough, from the interruption his breathing had sustained.

Lady Hester's particular partiality for the style of dress her husband termed *bantam*, was attributable to her desire of making Mary appear as childish as possible, and preventing the least likelihood of her infringing the womanly precincts yielded to her elder daughter; thus subjecting Mary to a series of annoyances through the indiscretion of a fond, but injudicious father, whose sallies, unless levelled at herself, or near her favourites, she seldom checked.

Aware, in a sisterly way, of Lady Hester's reasons for this fancy, her particular friend, Miss Dorothea Macklin, ridiculed exquisitely every change for the better in Mary's dress, nor could she allow to pass, unsneered at, the delicately white book-muslin, looped off her dimpled arms with the palest straw-coloured ribbon, whose mystic windings hardly developed a bow, or

defined an end, except where the broad sash, once knotted, hung pensively down by her side—the chaste and becoming costume she appeared in, after three years of growth in age and maidenly grace.

At this peculiar hour after dinner, Lady Hester's control over her husband, who at other times was tractable to servility, ceased altogether.

He was rather boisterous to-night, elated by no less the return of his favourite daughter than by the absence, for some time, of a fit of the gout; and hastening to the drawing-room earlier than usual, the same quantity of wine had been consumed in a shorter space of time; his head was so suddenly inflated with gas, as to threaten the ascension of the whole balloon, from the bands of propriety and etiquette, before the guiding principle—sobered reason—took charge of the helm.

"Come, my popinjay!" ejaculated her father, seizing Mary round the waist; he whirled her past chairs and tables in a violent waltzing fit, mistaking unequal time, and shouting like a hoarse

land-rail when he performed any particular feat of agility.

At length an asthmatic cough got possession of his windpipe; almost suffocated, he reeled to the sofa, and would have seated himself in Miss Dorothea Macklin's lap, had she not glided from under him, like an affrighted snake; and imitating that species called the Cobra, stood, with darting eyes, and hooded crest, fascinating the monster, as she inwardly confessed him. Seriously affected by the ludicrously horrific expression depicted in the lady's physiognomy and attitude, Frederick pressed his scented pocket-handkerchief to his mouth, from which certain uncontrollable expressions of mirth were escaping notwithstanding the efforts he made to restrain them.

Miss Dorothea turned from father to son, aghast at their proceedings. She shook her turban, under which every feature trembled; presently her hanging lip closed over her toothless gums, to retain the wrathful as well as

frothful expressions that gurgled as they rose through the valves of her pump-like throat : and she broke through the circle, making straight for the door, where she was arrested by Lady Hester, who had just smoothed down the laugh on her countenance, and getting up a piteous grimace, in a tragic tone of voice exclaimed : " Will you leave me thus, my friend ? "

" Dear Miss Dorothy ! papa did not know what he was about," chimed Emma ; " you are aware he seldom does. Frederick was laughing at him, not at you ! see now—you will upset poor mamma ! "

Lady Hester had forced one scanty tear from the corner of her dexter eye, and the tip of her nose was red—a marked evidence of intensity of feeling.

Miss Dorothea suffered herself to be wrought upon, and, squeezing Lady Hester's hand, (which had the effect of extracting another liquid tenderness) she assured her " she would sacrifice herself once more for her friend, who was surely to be

pitied with such unruly children as Mr. Frederick and Miss Mary, who began the romp, to say nothing of their dreadful, vulgar dotard of a father. Lady Hester must forgive the candour of this opinion, knowing that for her dear ladyship's earthly bliss she was particularly anxious and thought it high time to speak the truth, tho she might not be blindly beguiled into the belief that she had, or ever could, receive compensation for the birth, talents, and attractions she brought to her husband, and her self-denying devotion towards his thankless offspring."

A broken-hearted sigh was all that answered her; and Miss Dorothea was led to a beehive chair, close to the fire, in a corner behind the great door-screen, which was folded so as to enclose her completely.

Assured of a care for her bodily safety, Miss Dorothea, with her dress turned up on the fire lest it should be scorched, which action discovered the short length of a coarse lindsey petticoat, and feet upon a footstool, drew a gossamer scarf cl

to her person, and rolling up, in the form of horns, on either side, the long ends of her turban (which had suffered in her narrow escape), and fastening them with pins so as to preserve the shape for another and more fortunate show-night; furnished with a treatise upon the pains and aches, imaginary and real, of the human animal frame, usually attributed to biliousness, but in truth belonging to the heart—that tenderest, most susceptible, and indispensable organ of life, of health, of everything—with this voluminous and strictly original work in her hands, the spectacles unincumbered on her nose, and an obtuse notion of hearing—shut out from the world—Miss Dorothea was soon at home within herself.

The mistress of the household (who had been dismissed by the lady in question with, “go, my friend, keep your family in order if you can”) attended to the elder Miss Macklin, and, by every little attention in her power, endeavoured to make amends for the chagrin she must feel at her

highly nervous sister's discomfiture; but her mind would not allow her to appear aught less than personally injured, though inwardly despising her weak sister for the precipitancy of her retreat.

Captain Levison was fully employed patting Mr. Jones de Winter's back, whilst Frederick and Emma were teasing each other; the one declaring Frederick had drawn a final erasure on his name in Miss Dorothea Macklin's will; the latter assuring his sister she would be an old maid herself one of these days.

Mary had flown from the room as soon as she could disengage herself from her parent's embrace. Frightened, shamed, and breathless, she hesitated trembling at her cousin's door, wishing to enter and conceal herself, yet fearful of disturbing Edith.

"Come in," said a faint voice; and Mary discovered Edith standing, irresolutely holding the bell handle, and dressed as Mary had left her.



"Oh, is it you, Mary? I have been going to pull the bell this half hour, but could not quite make up my mind, lest a strange face should answer it. How happy I am you have come to me; I have felt so lonely and sad. I am ready to be introduced to my aunt, if you will lead me, dearest."

"I thought," said Mary, stammering, "that you would prefer seeing mamma to-morrow at breakfast time."

"No, love! I have been wishing to have it over before morning; there will be no dark corners to creep into when day-light comes."

"You dear goose! there is nothing very alarming in mamma, and I am sure papa is as kind as kind can be; but he is odd, Edith. You will not quite understand him at first," added Mary, whose thoughts were so recently engaged in her father's sayings and doings, that she would have given worlds not to have appeared in the drawing-room again that night; but if Edith's wishes were not attended to, it might be the cause of

awakening a still greater timidity in the young girl's breast.

Mary considered waltzing an unfeminine exercise; and should her papa, in his present state of mind, propose this to Edith, what would become of her poor cousin?

"Will my dress do?" said Edith, stopping at the door, wishing to find an excuse for delaying a few moments.

"Yes, perfectly—we are almost alone," rejoined Mary, agitatedly pressing Edith's hand.

"My brother Frederick, Edith dear," said Mary, as the young man accidentally opened the drawing-room door.

He retreated several paces upon first encountering Edith, and confused, made a gesture as if taking off his hat; then remembering he was within doors, bowed awkwardly, stammering something very unintelligible.

Emma now came forward; "I have seen you before, my fair cousin."

"No," said Edith, looking earnestly in her face; "I don't remember."

"When you were asleep, ma belle."

"Why, what have we got here? by all the knights of christendom, she's handsome! my pretty niece!" exclaimed Mr. Jones, kissing her.

Edith blushed deeply; no man had so saluted her but her father.

"By all that's lovely, she's like her mother!"

"Hush!" whispered Captain Levison, observing Edith turn pale; she felt faint—he offered his arm—and, supported by Edgar and Mary, she was conducted to where Lady Hester sat.

Her aunt stopped short in her conversation; and regarded Edith as she approached, with surprise, admiration, and a certain harsh gravity which was the only sentiment Edith noticed.

This chilled their intercourse directly; and "how is my dear niece?" and "pretty well thank you, aunt," faintly and timidly returned,

formed and closed the first conversation they had together.

Miss Macklin curtsied stiffly to the young lady, and to show her slight notice of her presence, instantly turned away to Lady Hester, with some trifling remark quite foreign to the present subject, or to the one that occupied them previous to Edith's appearance.

"Allow me to introduce my cousin to Miss Dorothea Macklin," said Emma, taking Edith by the hand; upon which, instantly her kind supporters fell back, and were soon occupied in mutual interesting conversation.

Captain Levison ever and anon directed his eyes and ears towards the fire screen, behind which Emma and her companion had disappeared.

"Dear Miss Dorothea! I desire to make you acquainted with Mary's sister in age, our cousin—the little girl I told you of."

"Eh! oh! where is she? that's not she! who is this?" said Miss Dorothy, flinging down the skirt of her gown, with a movement that cau

the shawl to envelope the group, and grasping at her turban's ends to arrange them more becomingly, looking all confusion at being *caught*.

Edith was alarmed at the singular being discovered suddenly in this remote corner; and, freeing herself from Emma, would have retreated, did not a second glance suffice to show her it was a tolerably tame, if not a sane, individual. She now stood like a culprit, listening to a lecture delivered to Emma, upon the impropriety of introducing a stranger to one in her unprepared situation, without previous notice.

Annoyed, for many reasons, at Miss Dorothea's wilful mistake and unseasonable loquacity, Emma fidgeted and frowned till the tirade had a little subsided in its intensity; then explained to the incredulous old maid the true state of the case, and positive relationship in which this fair girl stood to herself.

Then it was that Edith timidly returned, as the blood-shot eyeballs staring through the great orbits of her spectacles threatened to shiver the

glass that confined them. Her sharp nose, and twisted neck stretched to its limits, with all the shrivelled attributes of a fully ill-natured countenance, were pointed at her.

"I suppose, little miss, you don't think yourself handsome?—the vanity of children present day! How badly your dress fits too tight by half; it should be let out a couple of a yard, if you were my daughter. The now-a-days die invariably of disease of the chest from squeezing!"

"Miss Leslie, will you permit me, without short an acquaintance, to have the honour of handing you to the piano?"

"Thank you!" murmured Edith; and with grateful understanding of the *ruse*, took Captain Levison's proffered arm, and immediately fled as far from the instrument of music, and from the torture, as the limits of the room would permit—her soul unstrung—not one sentiment sacrificed to melody.

o was disconcerted at losing the  
fixed upon for leading off a coun-  
Frederick, endeavouring to con-  
t Levison's success in obtaining so  
for a tête-a-tête, walked to where  
; Macklin sat, and coxcomically  
, his body bent to a right angle,  
me the supreme felicity."

! you are aware I don't reel,"  
lf up disdainfully; "heads that  
to addle may whirl as long as the  
lasts. I reserve my senses for  
l reflection."

; portrait has the mirror of sub-  
d for ma belle cousine?

t of mere animal faculties, what



wife by your discerning allusions."

t away boy!" whispered his mother, who was seriously irritating her friend.

edient to the mother who spoiled me, I a good night! I must away to Jack's—a pretty word for your dictionary, Jacklin. We are going to have a jollification-night."

high by constant repetition you have taught monstrous—become inebriated like a sailor, like a huntsman, and to warn your loving that their hopeful returns, sound the horn in our peaceful valleys until they get to hoot; to conclude, look cadaverous, lack of head-ache and disturbed rest to-morrow at breakfast."

actly so, you have hit it nicely, dear



I will pay my compliments at Bettws in the morning."

Miss Macklin aside to Lady Hester, "I must say he is the most discreet young man I know."

That night Edith rested her fevered head upon the pillow, desiring the repose it suggested, yet fearing to sleep lest the morning should arrive too early.

Mary, as one whose thoughts were none of the happiest, feigned extreme fatigue as an excuse for her silence.

Although her mild blue eyes were closed, her thoughts were still watching over her cousin's destiny, with an anxiety that boded no end or relief to her pain, when the tender Abigail drew the curtains noiselessly and close round her charge.

## CHAPTER XI.

Go, thou vision wildly gleaming,  
 Softly on my soul that fell ;  
 Go, for me no longer beaming—  
 Hope and beauty ! fare ye well !

Go, and all that once delighted  
 Take, and leave me all benighted :  
 Glory's burning—generous swell,  
 Fancy and the poet's shell.

C. WOLFE.

Evening was closing rapidly over the hamlet of Rochelle ; the village-green presented a scene of petty warfare ; those sociable birds, (who imitate man in their habits and passions) noisy sparrows, chattered on the sprays, or chased each other in wild animosity from bush to briar—now fluttered

The honest labourer, shutting out the chilly blast, rested from toil in the chimney corner, smoking a pipe to the tune of the cradle he rocked with his foot, studious in keeping the baby asleep whilst the good wife was busied in preparing a rasher of home-cured bacon for her husband's supper.

The elder children, emancipated from school, determined to enjoy to the latest hour their half-holiday, gambolled together in the cold twilight, or, peeping into their neighbour's windows, learned if Mrs. Mac Pherson's shined with a rush-candle or a dipped—how Farmer Bran had a pint of ale to his supper, and that the tops, marbles, cakes, crackers, and dolls, with sundry memoirs of Jack the Giant Killer, Tom Thumb, and Little Red Riding-hood, looked just as tempting in the fine new shop as they did before the scholars went to their teacher's in the morning; and finally, the urchins scampered off to detect which of their daddies emptied his glass at the public-house, or who, decent and sober,

bought a new pipe, with a long shaft and red tip, to carry home and enjoy with his week's earnings—for it was pay-day.

The dust rose in eddies on the rude pavement, little girls clapped their aprons before their faces, whilst the boys stuffed the ends of their jackets to their eyes. The tramp of a horse was heard; and, casting away all impediments, the ragged flock sped round the corner, to see as well as the loaded air would permit, who approached the hamlet at such an hour.

In a twinkling, Joe, the ostler of the Pipe and Tumbler, held the horse's head, lustily shouting, "Landlord Roundman! chamber maid! attend the company. Maggy, d'ye hear?"

Upon which the bar-maid, &c. of this primitive inn, presented herself, giving a smart dip to the stranger, who had dismounted, and looked up disconsolately at the significant sign that swung so inebrately over his head.

Covered with dust, he commenced clearing his boots with his riding whip, upon which the

village children, who had crowded near, fell back to a respectful distance.

"Would yer honour take a glass?" gracefully inquired Maggy, curtseying again, desirous of attracting the gentleman's attention, who, by this time, she had discovered to be very handsome.

"Thank you! I'll take a walk instead," examining the prospect, considering whither he should bend his steps.

"Are you going to rub down my horse, boy?" seeing the animal stretching his neck, now and then champing his bit, to remind the groom he needed refreshment.

Joe was loth to leave his intended in company with an "out-and-out gentleman," and one so well-be-liking; for Maggy, he knew, thought beauty no small endowment, and he feared she was rather a *larking* girl, and a bit of a flirt."

"Haste, and bait him; I have upwards of twenty miles further to ride to Earl Ratcliffe's before he is stabled to-night; use him well—he

is a favourite—and you shall have your due, and something to make it even.”

A running fire of *dips* upon Maggy's part followed the sound of the lordling's name, and Joe, opening his mouth to its utmost, and pulling violently at his rabbit-skin cap, wheeled right about, commencing that hiss with which grooms in general accompany their manual exertions in the stable, which sounded in that steed's humble billet louder and longer the same evening, than since the bricks and mortar had been united to form the building.

The pretty bar-maid, (her bright hazel eyes looking alternately shy and sly, her hair in paper against Sunday morning) at every word exercising herself with her rustic obeisance, entered into an explanation with the stranger, as how “Landlord Roundman (her master) was not just very well at present ; but there was nae reason why he should not be quite himself when he woke in an hour or two ; and if his *grace* would walk in and rest

meanwhile, 'tis convenient she'd be to wait on him, and could offer an egg, a slice of salty bacon, and tea, if he did not like punch; which her master's own receipt for making was—of sour, two of sweet, three of strong, and four of weak, the strong being put in last, with a dash to mellow it, and stirred always to the right. "For gentlemen," she said, hesitating at the title, "admired the excellence of this *breverage*, the landlord of the inn thought of taking out a patent for it."

Smiling at the sparkle and vigour of her liquid commendation, the young man assured his fair companion he needed no guide to his perambulations, and would stroll about whilst the lad refreshed himself.

Now an individual could roll about for his amusement, without first taking something to brace him just satisfactorily giddy, and how the lord Roundman could not help such an one. The other long word, Maggy was at a loss to define.

Riveted to the spot she remained, strain her sight after the stranger, till some dark t in the distance overshadowed him; then cut a little urchin who stood in the door-way, peo into the bar, scattering the pack with a wa her hand, she betook herself to a gossip's by, to tell how a high lord, next to the kin grandeur and bearing, was the guest of the and Tumbler, and a real lord's horse was Joe in the stable, mingling her regrets that landlord was dreaming drunk with the loons the village."

Meanwhile Joe rubbed down his charge an anxiety and perseverance that seemed to that he considered a horse, the property of a required an extra proportion of food and atte to other brutes, and when the mental absor proceeding from pride and astonishment, "t lord, every inch of him, honoured the houte his custom," Joe manufactured a whole t the peerage with embellishments, for al tattle-lovers in the place whom he should m



the Cross on the coming Sunday—a favourite day for congregations of this sort.

At length, in exultation of his performance, Joe, thrusting the damp stubble from his heated forehead, exclaimed: “There’s a coat for a noble knight’s noble *coursier*; it’s like the *map* on cloth; I warrant Maggy could see her pretty face in the shiney glass, and would do little but be a-tiring and a-combing on her own hair, if she had him to mind. Did ever my roguish eye—(as Maggy calls the blinking one, the sauceboy!) did ever it see the like of his *sattin* mane and lashing tail? I have seven minds and a half to fetch Davie Clinker the smithy, to behowld the critter’s long pasterns and clean fetlocks; he’d swear, if I hadn’t this horse to *comfort* him, that no such stately bodied beast could stand upon legs of his sort. Not a wind-gall, a splint, or a sprain to boot. Faith, I think the animal must be a grandee, as well as his master—come of high blood, and fine *breedin*! There’s Shin Blanter’s mare couldn’t hold a sop o’ straw to him, and the

ly apparelled lady, mocking the naked-leath, lay above the vault that contained mouldering remains of a once noble whose long line of ancestry was marked as of tombs in the same cloister, their mutilated and their dates worn out. The glass cast a mysterious colour over the the memoriated dead, that, tinging the s garb and feature, appeared to number the silent of the earth.

3 finished her business, a decrepid old hobbled to the door-way, and turning t rusty key, it creaked terribly in his

ily feeling the whole solitariness of his, the young man rushed with an anxious on to the oaken barrier—it had closed—on bolts that studded the panels looked ble and gloomy upon him.

id and reiterated expressions of distress pierced the deaf ears of the crone ; and

returning the key to its sepulchre, she slowly opened the door.

"I thought you must be the grave-digger," she said, regarding the stranger with some surprise, and speaking deliberately: "he had a tablet to rear in the chancel this evening. Why has he not fitted it? Ah, ha! some more *faah* writing, I ween, that fain would keep the poor clay out of the dark hole grim Garble's axe made for it this morning. Queer readings of the old story hang upon the grey walls; they would amuse you," she said, with a childish laugh. Then, becoming very grave: "And learn you, may be, how to miser time others have lost for ever. Who knows but the sorrowful king may overtake you, or some one dear to you, before many nights have run?"

Shuddering at the prophetic tenor of her conversation, and desirous of interrupting it, the young man asked whether she knew the name of Leslie.

Seeing his lips moving, the crone bent her

head in a listening attitude. "My name, master ! Margery Toms—still above ground, and at your bidding."

"The lady Edith Lealie I would hear of."

A convulsive working of the old woman's face warned our hero that her thoughts bore an evil import. "My mistress ! my dear ! I could weep for you ! but have no water here, the spring has long since dried up ! Yet why lament ?" she continued, soliloquizing, and gazing upwards to the sky ; "I shall soon wait upon you there !"

"She was young and handsome," said the stranger, his voice trembling with emotion, yet eager the old woman should not mistake the person he inquired for.

"She was an angel—a saint—come see her resting-place."

Awe-struck, and with his head uncovered, the young man confronted a plain marble slab, bearing the name he murmured.

Margery had taken her solitary way unheeded ; still he dwelt upon those expressive letters, and

still, reality seemed unreal, as raising his head, on which the evening dew fell bright and clear, he gazed round to assure himself that a church-yard was the place of his meditations.

O'er true ! the cypress, those dignified mutes, surrounded him; the hemlock grew rank, and the yew trees waved their gloomy tresses; their leaves weeping on the silent tombstones, seemed as if nature shed there her softest sympathies. The sunlight, just seen above the folds of ivy, mantling its high wall, reminded him of gleams of hope in a distant heaven, that softened the whole train of thought the sad scene of mortality inspired.

"The old crone was right," he soliloquized; "why desire to pluck a brilliant fresh set in her Maker's diadem? E'en had she lived, we might have never met; she has long forgotten me. Could her angel look down, and bless a pilgrim at this shrine, I might go forth happier."

A myrtle blossoming at her feet—its fragrance reached his senses. "Type of love divine! how camest thou hither?" exclaimed the young man, addressing the flower.

Turned by some tender hand—a brother, it be, or a sister's; a mother's tears would hrowned thee ere thy roots had sprung! a lover have reared this emblem of his unpassion? If he never loved before, his loss yet been heavier than mine."

stranger gathered a branch of the ever-olding it in a handkerchief he took from m, and after examining some characters n hair on this delicate fabric, he replaced his heart.

ring till night clothed the scene, he to take a farewell of the grave and flower. noans, accompanied by the rattling of among the tombstones, caused him to breath, and stand at bay.

ing over the graves, a white spot, as a ur, came flickering, followed by the clank iron. It approached to where he stood, whole man, his courage and muscles, were sistance.

nly uttering a bark of recognition, the

stranger was embraced by the paws of a large black hound, the white tip of whose tail he had seen dancing upon the tombs to such melancholy music.

"Meteor, Meteor! dost remember me!" cried the young man, unable to restrain his emotion. "Do we watch together over a dead mistress!" The eyes of the dog blazed with a fiery light as he said this, and turning to the grave, he howled over it long and deeply.

Having broken his chain, the intelligent animal evidently sought his gentle mistress at the grave of her mother, that she was wont to visit, and rehearse precepts of mortality, by thinking over the lesson so harshly taught her. In vain the young man endeavoured to attract the dog from his post, with the view of discovering his home; the faithful animal, deaf to all persuasion, persisted in his lonely watch, whining dismally.

Our hero, retiring in haste and agitation to the Inn, called for his horse, and casting a piece of money to the attendant, dashed off in an opposite

without heeding reiterated shouts of  
om a set of idle boys (assembled by  
e, to see a "real live lord")—"that this  
the way to the great house;" showing  
all been ready primed for his real des-  
and could not be silent when their  
was outraged. That he was deaf, dumb,  
nad, they all agreed; putting their hands  
pockets, and sneaking away to their  
oking very foolish, they knew not why.  
nd Joe, the servitors of the alighted inn,  
ore seriously rebuked than the rest.

ing on at a prodigious pace, without  
tion or forethought, the bound of his  
ing lost a great portion of its elasticity,  
animal sensibly labouring, as he struck  
with unequal force before rising to the  
lmonished the rider of the undue pressure  
ra.

l nigh forgotten my good Tartar; thou  
dy done no mean day's work," said the  
an, drawing the horse to a walk, and



throwing the reins on his neck, let him choose his own footing.

His broad chest covered with foam, the snail tossed his head, and shook his mane, in pure enjoyment of his liberty. Avoiding the stones and taking the smooth places, he steadily pursued his course.

"Thus ever too late!" groaned the traitress.  
"Fate and I were at enmity; deceptive, I wooed softly to mock me when I loved! Had I said that word? or was it she beguiled me?"

Sobered by this expression of his feelings, he thought again what could he have any longer do with the lovely vision that haunted his waking as his dreaming hours. She was gone—for ever gone! and why should this concern him?

He looked upon the fleecy clouds that clung to each other over the firmament, restraining the tears that filled his eyes from flowing down his cheeks, and betraying his emotion to his friends. Something might engage him to-night of

importance than a dead maiden ; he remembered having no weapon with him, and a reckless feeling took possession of his breast—a feeling before which courage itself would quake—a feeling that caused an absolute mirth to laugh at death and court disaster.

Night had set in ; ruling the watch, a beautiful moon, with her sentinel stars to guard the hemisphere, shone brightly on the cliffs, whose jagged forms cast long shadows, that stalked, like giants of darkness, in his wake. The wind in gusts, now low moaning, now full and loud, echoed from cliff to cliff, and whistled in the crevices of the rocks, with a piercing coldness that caused the snail to hide its head. The limpet and sea-creatures closed their shells, the fish made for the deeps, and the crab buried itself in the sand.

Shivering, our hero unstrapped the cloak from his saddle-bow, and wrapped it closely round him. The road lay along the coast, and the sea roared

as it rose and foamed, sinking into shrill music as it retired over the pebbles.

This coast he well knew was the constant resort of smugglers and desperate characters, from the facility its natural caverns afforded for shelter and concealment. Many daring robberies had here taken place, and many travellers who were known to have pursued this route had never again been heard of.

While these thoughts occupied his mind, the horse stopped abruptly, snorted, and scattering the dust with his nostrils, stamped upon the ground, adding to the echoes the ring of his iron hoofs, as if ten coursers strode the way.

A sound different from those that hushed them to roost, frightened the sea-maw and cormorant from their tempest havens; screeching they skimmed the floods, and were lost among the white breakers of the distance.

Could a gang be near? Warily he listened, and smiling loosed his arms for defence.

## NOTES TO VOL. I.

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### A.

"*A cross.*"—The traveller through the southern and western parts of Ireland may still meet with many of these ancient symbols of faith, particularly in the bye-roads.

### B.

"*Square-cut lakes.*"—The lakes here noticed as produced by the turf-cuttings, are of varied figure, and abound in the boggy districts of Ireland, giving a strange formality to the otherwise wild and dreary landscape.

### C.

"*Unfinished, like the exterior, &c.*"—To those who are unacquainted with the national character, it may appear

singular that Carrigvhair, in its unfinished state, should still be represented as inhabited.

The scale of its external magnificence, or the finish of an Irish elevation, is by no means a type of the consistency within the same mansion; the economy of comfort being often unknown or unappreciated by the architect; or the majesty of his conceptions having drained his purse, in the execution of the "big house," which is the first and most indispensable necessary of a proud Irish man's existence. By the light of a single candle, such as one, with a smile of derision at his neighbour's inferior accommodation, will triumphantly peel a potatoe under the rafters of his spacious banqueting-hall, and think setting up for the county or taking a wife.

An instance may be related of a young man, who having anticipated the income of several years in erecting a palace-like residence, succeeded in persuading an upholsterer to sparingly furnish a couple of the smaller rooms, which were to be paid for out of his wife's dowry (should he be so fortunate as to win the hand of a certain heiress).

He succeeded in his suit. Upon his wedding day, the bridegroom and a party of friends were conversing standing on a flight of stone steps, without the entrance door. A laughing dispute arose; and overbalancing himself in the intoxication of mirth, the bridegroom was precipitated from the unguarded platform into a court eighteen feet below. His life was preserved by his being

in a feather bed, which the servant on the instant flung in the barrow to the airing ground.

rears after this event, upon the coming of age of the son, a grand entertainment was given.

the total absence of paper or paint, the staring rough the first coating of plaister, and the pos- the cornice by sundry sparrows and bats, who r homes in the crevices, an hour before the time it was found that one of the doors in the had never been hung, nor hinges provided. it was propped up for the occasion, and looked as well, and might easily have passed remark, luck would have it, the undue shaking of the ed the ponderous machine to break from its and the dancers hardly escaped severe injuries ng in the midst.

ning was closed by the host's particular friend on the flight of stone steps before alluded to; never, a man of great muscular power, and in angle of the building, he hung suspended, by his chin, mid earth and skies, till a ladder ht to his relief.

the accident reminded the lord of the mansion on palings had not been cast at the foundry.

#### D.

*d me twice in real Latin.*"—Poor Paddy has a veneration for Latin; he will tell you that it is

the only tongue besides his own that the devil does not understand. He believes salvation is in the sound, and swallows with avidity the ambiguous words poured out by the priest.

END OF FIRST VOLUME.



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**EDITH LESLIE.**

**VOL II.**

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**EDITH LESLIE.**

**A NOVEL.**

**IN THREE VOLUMES.**

**VOL II**

**LONDON:**  
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**1844.**



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T. C. NEWBY, PRINTER, MORTIMER STREET.

# EDITH LESLIE.

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## CHAPTER I.

What is the tale that I would tell? Not one  
Of strange adventure, but a common tale  
Of woman's wretchedness; one to be read  
Daily in many a young and blighted heart.

L. E. L.

Trotting on freely, the horse snuffed the air as winding something at no great distance. The smell of wood-smoke was discernible. Again the animal halted, now at a turn in the rocks, and pointing his ears forwards, seemed to wait a word of encouragement from his master ere he should venture through the dense masses of stone that

guarded the entrance of the wild retreat lying before them.

Forming a chasm open to the sky, the granite peaks gave to the moon's beams a bright intensity that contrasted awfully with the depth and gloom at their base.

Apathetic as to danger, our hero reconnoitred the various passes that seemed to merge from their entrance. Tracing their ridge against the blue heavens, and wondering whither they led when, doubtful if he should dare unarmed the mystic windings, or proceed unmolested, and unmolested upon his way—out of the rocks, faint sobs and pitiful lamentations came, as proceeding from something very young and tender.

No other sounds but those of the elements mingled with this distinct appeal to his heart.

Dismounting hastily, he spoke a few Tartar words to his steed, and had not advanced many paces, when he stumbled against a mule that rested upon the ground. Fortunately the animal

mediately, or he might have been precipitated over its body. One or two others, at the sight of their fellow's hoofs, made haste to rise. The third horse added his nobler presence to the rest, and the young man, recovering from the shock occasioned by the resurrection of these apparitions, became aware that he approached a gipsy camp.

Scarcely were the gang were sleeping, or, most probably, absent upon some marauding expedition in the neighbourhood. This last thought gave him an excuse for proceeding; the crackling of a fire appeared close at hand, and following the direction it indicated, he discovered a fire in an opening between the rocks.

A exceedingly fair and lovely child knelt over a pile of faggots, its long flaxen ringlets forming a canopy over its little shoulders; a garment reaching to its knees completed the child's clothing, leaving the stranger to conjecture from the transparency of skin and delicate colouring of its limbs, that the infant belonged

to a far different class than the squalid ones  
ally herding in such places.

He believed it had been robbed from a  
home; and his suspicions were strengthened  
its beseeching blue eyes were raised to the  
gled heavens, as invoking the sympathy of  
star that shone there. Tears flowed down  
cheeks, and it appeared to suffer poignantly.

Something so distinct from the wild  
like gleam of the dark gipsy child, induc-  
adventurer to move gently towards it, in  
with the desire to learn the infant's story,  
the repository of its griefs.

At first the child's expression of sorrow  
changed into one of terror, and crouching  
lower in the red glaring fire, seemed to the  
destroying element.

"My child!" he murmured softly. Se-  
to accents of kindness, the little creature  
up in his face, and, meeting compassion  
leaped into his arms, exclaiming: "Tate  
mammy; oh, tate me! tate me!"

Comforting and caressing the foundling, till it was all joy and confidence, he whistled to his horse, who, fighting his way with kicks and bites through the sulky mules that held the entrance, found his master, and kneeling, according to eastern training, received the twofold burden.

Rochelle was the nearest place, and entering the road the young man commenced retracing his route. Enveloped in his cloak, he pressed the little trembler to his breast, and wondered who should claim it.

"Dare, dare! hide me, hide me!" cried the child, pointing where the strand lay broadest.

The traveller discovered two figures apparently seeking the wood thrown up by the tide. One was meagre and tall; the other, judging by the robe, seemed to be a woman. They raised their eyes as he passed, and gazed long and wistfully at him. His fairy charge nestled its head in his breast and cried again.

"Hush! little one," he whispered, "fear not—



you are safe with me, and soon shall see  
and mother, and sisters may be."

"I hab no fader—I neber had one," said  
child, looking up innocently in his face; "y  
Alick's fader—won't you?"

Affected at the tenderness and simplicity  
infant's appeal, the young man would have  
promised to fill the place of his lost parent  
he otherwise destitute.

A widowed mother—her mourning figure  
cap of woe—presented itself to his susceptible  
mind, and he thought with delight how she  
rejoice at receiving back her only darling.  
reflections cast a soft light over the gloom  
mind, and he approached the hamlet with his  
feelings than he had left it.

First the pale spire of that lonely church  
then rows of white-washed chimneys, and  
roofs, and doors and windows, that at a distance  
looked like dots, became clearer and more distinct  
as they journeyed at a rapid pace toward  
sleeping hamlet.

How peaceful, how perfect that repose," he  
emplated. "Bodies wearied with wholesome  
rest soundly; thoughts that can aspire  
higher than to the weather-cock of the steeple,  
soon stilled in refreshing slumber; vanity  
little to excite; rivalry can have less where  
all in houses of the same type, and seem to  
eat the same flitch of bacon. A mongrel cur  
barks over the whole village, and one chanti-  
ment (its only time-piece) announces that himself  
and the sun have risen; and man should follow  
this early example. All are refreshed at the  
well, and one stream meanders through the  
village."

On appearances like these our hero drew his  
conclusions, without considering fully the basis on  
which they were placed, and concluded humble  
life more happy than the sphere of his nativity;  
contented with a state of which was a fertile and lasting  
source of trial and temptation to the mind and  
soul. Does not this support the argument  
that it matters little whatever our state, or birth-place

of action, we are yet found complaining? Ever craving for novelty, a higher and more advantageous condition, the heritor of riches could ensure consumption for the wealth of worlds far beyond the stars, and where those revolve he has already anticipated it.

The man of comparative fortune seeks an extraneous portion of ease and affluence, and the poor man withers for his neighbour's gold—one piece of which, he fancies, would make him an independent, satisfied individual; whilst the beggar trembles with delight at the contemplation of silver, contrasted strongly, in his mind, with the copper coin that paves his slippery path.

The poor man has fewer wants, but he is not less invidious. To the rich, the denial of a wish becomes a privation; and the individual, stricken in poverty, who cannot provide beyond to-day and blanches if he think on't, is, morally speaking, on a par as distressing as the wealthy master, whose anxiety increases with the number in his establishment; and whose substance is

consumed in aims at a superiority he can never reach; or which, if he succeed in attaining, a sick coach receives the over-taxed body, and a premature old age encroaches upon a life of ambition, of the worldly miser and mental spendthrift.

Better were the poor man to eat his crust with content; and the rich, grateful for what he possessed, to confine his desires within the compass of his resources.

Some men, setting aside the power of the mighty dispenser of constitutional laws, either overflowing with benevolence (their minds cramped by ignorance, and her sterile sister prejudice, destitute of reflection) or leaders of faction, who have nothing to lose, and may gain by the alluring proposition—pretend to consider a just and equal distribution of goods the level of wisdom, and would place all men upon the same footing; forgetting that servitors existed when we had shortly begun; first, children were their father's servants, and as the population of the world increased, bondmen and slaves fulfilled the

menial offices of the household. Thus the poor were employed, fed, and clothed: these again increased in multitude, and beggars asked alms at the palace-portals where their sires were bred.

Our Lord declares that "the poor are always with us," and does not add that the world's condition, in this respect, shall ever change; nor is it meet it should. This is designed to form the great contrast between earth and heaven.

If all were equal, how would all be supported? As it is better there should be one sovereign over a people, (this sovereign answerable to One of immensity) so should there be heads among this people, to conduct the business of the lesser endowed, to preserve their social comforts, and maintain the common interest, peace and plenty, which follow as blessings from the hand of Almighty God. A direct confirmation that the duty of every class in the community has been performed.

As there are different degrees of moral as well

as physical development, so can there never be statistical equality. Will the man of active habits condescend, philanthropically, to minister to the slothful, and keep him still in indolence and ease? Will the sensible person preserve the idiot's property from emaciation, and let him live on, a fool enjoying his folly? Ah! sooner would the miser, to his cost, assist the spendthrift, than such people dwell together in equanimity! Can the sensualist be uprooted from the earth? or sin, that becomes ours by inheritance—can sin no more circulate in our veins? and will not crime spring from an artery fresh tapped by provocatives to the raging torrent? A placebo were hard to find for the several ills of life. Many bodily diseases are incurable, and can the great evil contracted at birth be eradicated by the skill of man? The Lord alone must change the heart before purity of substance shall be effective of peace.

Let the stickler for equality regard with temperance the course of events, and he will

distinguish the impartial hand of providence throughout.

Many a beggar whose sordid rags deface our streets, could trace his descent from a robed lord who held proud sway over serf and retainer. In time the goodly inheritance dwindled, and the vassal reigns over the children of his former master—now peasantry become, now paupers, at their father's gates. Another child of fortune descended from a long and illustrious line of ancestry, becomes tire-woman to some purse-proud belle, whose sire has purchased the halls of her fathers, and whose newly acquired plumes efface the scutcheon of inheritance that once shone blazoned on those walls.

Such are the changes and chances of life—such the phenomena centuries take to develope. The present poor were not always so; in process of time it became their turn to want.

Let those men who desire equality seek diligently to be accepted in heavenly courts, where all shall “shine as the stars in the firmament,”

earth its sublunary things, and dis-  
as. And here I would conjure the  
o be alway generous in bestowing  
his children, at some future day, should  
in vain ! Finally, taking a lesson from  
loyal bee, may we serve our queen in  
ness and fervour of body and spirit, having  
we depart nothing from the truth ; that,  
ning our duty in this world, we may obtain  
mice in a better.

rnng to our hero, we now find him close  
amlet, his gallant steed in a lather from  
to haunches. Galled by the bit, the  
at large flakes of foam to the heavens  
essly tost his nervous head.

rticularly well-ordered dwelling, its  
e, and blooming garden, attracted the  
the traveller. Not a thorn on the  
hedge appeared awry ; the early  
constellations, seemed in the night-  
usters of snowdrops vied with the



Fascinated by the beauty of this humble retreat, the first at the entrance of the village our hero, in a meditative mood, stopped opposite he wondered why lights should so late be seen in those latticed windows. The cessation of motion awoke the infant who slumbered in his arms, and screaming with all his might, "that's mummy home, and Nelly's!" held out his hands in ecstasy.

Attracted by the child's voice, instantly the door was opened by a lady-like old woman; she received the infant in her embrace, sobbing laughing, and exclaiming: "Here's the dear one safe again! oh mother, mother! hail your child!"

The active little creature extricating itself dropped from her aged palms, and bounded like a fawn to a back chamber, where reclined on couch his mother.

Charmed from a swoon by Nelly's electric words, she hugged her lost lamb to her bosom feeling so inexpressibly grateful at this moment

of his restoration, that she could neither frame a sentence, nor utter one if formed for her.

A laughing boy sitting on a tombstone, could not picture gaiety and gravity half so well as the little cherub on his mother's knee.

Pale as the marble monument that rises o'er the cold earth, she seemed sculptured there; the beams of a few risen stars, glistening on her falling tears, alone revealed the truth, defying nature to show a fairer form.

Nelly regarded the group with feelings near akin to madness of joy—intemperance of happiness! At length blessing, praising, magnifying his almighty deliverer, the pious old woman reverted to the child's temporal deliverer, and just remembered having left him at the door-way.

"Thank you, good kind sir," she repeated, her countenance overflowing with delight, and her hand pressed to her bosom. "I never, never shall be able to make you understand the gratitude that continues swelling here for the service you have rendered; by night, a prayer shall

Our hero, unable to reply, received her with a bow, which he thought due to the and dignity of the person who addressed him. Standing under the porch, with the bridle in his arm, he gave a brief description of the in which he had found the child, and learned Nelly, that being a very enterprising boy of age, he had doubtless wandered far from home and been picked up by these vagrants; and added, "stripped, not only of his clothing which was delicately embroidered by his mother, but what was worse, plundered of a miniature portrait of his father, that was suspended by a gold chain from the infant's neck."

Hereupon the stranger asked if his mother was a widow?

husband has run away from her, and  
vned nor seen his child. She is  
and I hope will live to die a saint.  
too is a promising flower. Do you  
at child would not string three words  
re to-night? and just now I heard him  
sibly as the most forward boy of his  
ro and a half) might be supposed to  
this has overcome his mother as  
ything else. 'Twas but to-night I  
de the sore stricken creature to rest  
that the Almighty had provided for  
andered up and down the country  
t bemoaning her loss, till after sunset  
when I made her cast her care upon  
st knew how to help her. As soon  
er was uttered, she fell into a deep  
lain so till her child's return. Sir,  
long, as this white hair will tell  
my time have read hard lines on  
ages of life; but never have I seen a  
case than this young woman's.

"She speaks of the well-favoured look  
anointed tongue of him, who swore death  
not them sever ; simple, the maiden wooed  
sorrow, and brought an eternal curse on th  
one's soul.

"You are too handsome, young man !  
you mar the features God hath stamped,  
of laying snares for guileless women !  
follies tempt you, put both hands upon  
heart, and ask that faithful servant, whe  
relaxes in performing its vital labour ; w  
ceases to beat you will be extinct. So  
nobility of your mind, the moment that v  
out virtue's glorious colours. The we  
smile on you still ; but conscience c  
regain her lost standard, and in secret  
at her cowardly master ! Remember  
of an old woman ! and receive them  
from a world of spirits, for I feel alread  
in my grave !"

Awed by this sybilline warning, s  
by contending feelings, the stranger ha

card from his pocket book, wrote upon it a few words in pencil, adding, that "if the young female at any time should apply to him for assistance, he was ready to give her every honourable relief in his power." He then wished Nelly 'good night,' and, mounting, rode off, muttering to himself, "Alaric ! that is no common name ! this is very singular—what a strange old lady !—and how fine her intellect to the last !"

The Pipe and Tumbler was the only hostelry in Rochelle, and compelled by fatigue and the urgency of the hour, the traveller halted a second time under that sign-board ; and after seeing his horse refreshed with a mash, and littered down for the night, guided by the smell of ale, rum, and brandy-punch, he found the tap-room ; and "as luck would have it," (as Maggy said) just at the same moment landlord Roundwood, spherical as his name signified, rolled off a bench, and fell with a violence that, waking, sobered him instantly.

Mine host rubbed his eyes, a seeing a stranger,

collected himself, yawning forth : " Dreaming drinking made me tipsy, I declare ! did you, ever feel the like ? It's not at all usual with who see so much of this ere."

The stranger sipped a cup of weak tea he accepted from Maggy's hand, who much " feared he would fall away to a spindle by the morning if he didn't taste a mouthful ;" and after refusing the host's best recommended fermented liquor asked for some dry toast.

The landlord slapped him violently upon back : " That's a brave soul ! I thought you would take courage to drink with the right holder of the smoking Pipe and jolly Tumbler. Is't the king or the country, the army or navy (the battering boys) you'd like first, or second, or last ?"

Maggy nudged the boisterous speaker, winked and squinted to attract his attention. " I'm your master, you be too familiar ; he's a great lord, he'll shoot out o' the house, if we don't reverence him. Did ye ever know of anybody having

ity to 'dress the king, or puggle glasses with

ectly unintelligible were these sounds to  
ty intended to hear them, who, as well as  
ro, was absolutely stunned by the addi-  
ringing of glass bottles one against the  
and the barking of a lame turnspit; who  
t Joe must have turned thief, or something  
as the stable-boy crept into the passage,  
he remained standing, fearing to intrude  
nial presence upon the lord in the tap-  
much to the disturbance of the aforesaid  
t, who gave tongue vehemently, as he  
from the fire-place to the door, peeping at  
l piping fresh notes in a higher key each  
took.

ay, you little ferret! can't you be easy?  
have the swell to know I be here, would  
emarked Joe, threatening to kick the dog  
middle of next week if he did'nt behave

stranger had to exert his lungs to explain



away the mistake; and gently setting aside tumblers and glasses of all dimensions and beverages that had been placed before him for selection of the one to his taste, and thereby disconcerting his host considerably, who had had some high shelf work in procuring these liquors, leaving the Roundman to consume the sample spirits at his leisure, (who was a strenuous opposer to waste in all shapes but his own undue proportion.) Our hero sallied forth to his host's chamber—the best, in this apology for an inn, and which was, (what Maggy termed) “as spicy a one as need be for a heavy sleeper;” and ordering his horse at five in the morning, he sought a much needed repose. Maggy afterwards declared herself “certain sure the lodger was a *knight-arrant*, for she had heard of such things in books, and his hand and words were as handsome as his face;” particularly as it was noised abroad next day, that a gentleman, answering his description, had found in a gipsey camp, and brought home, the little Alaric Denham.

Soon after his departure from her door, Nelly put into Mrs. Denham's hand the card the stranger had left ; she had hardly rested her eyes upon it, than, uttering a scream, she rushed to the door ; and finding everything silent without, returned to weep over her infant, speaking incoherently of his father, and singing snatches of French hymns.

Her bodily strength failing, her mind giving way, she gradually relapsed into a state of insensibility.

## CHAPTER II.

'Tis he, the Nimrod of the neighbour  
Save that his scent is less acute than  
For persevering chase, and headlong  
True beagle as the stanchest hound h  
Charged with the folly of his life's m  
He takes offence, and wonders what y  
The joy, the danger, and the toil o'er  
'Tis exercise, and health, and length

•

Each morning at breakfast Edith  
to sit beside her cousin Frederick,  
could not be induced to call an  
familiar than Mr. Frederick, and  
dwelling distance of expression upon  
that provoked him to retort, occasion

Missing her, with a comic-respectful grimace, causing Edith to blush in very confusion at his impudence; when he generally alluded to his partiality for toast, vowing "he hated pale bread as much as pale women." He rejoiced in that "embrowning of the fruit which tells, how deep within the soul of sweetness dwells!"

Again, if she asked for sugar, he invariably declared that if she but touched the cup with her lips, no need remained for troubling him; and if Edith said anything timidly expressive of her dislike for such conversation, he would gaze admiringly in her face, and request the charming Edith "to repeat those syllables—her mouth appeared never to such advantage."

Sometimes made angry, she knitted her arched brows, and shot glances at him, plainly declarative of her disapprobation, nay, detestation of his deportment; when Frederick would protest, "he adored her in every variety of expression;" assuring her at the same time, "she could not look black—her eyes were too heavenly a blue!"

In fine, if urged beyond looks, and tempted to castigate him with severer words, he pronounced her passion, as that of so fair a woman, quite a snow storm, and concluded by entering into a learned discourse concerning the change of figure in flakes of snow, the beauty and variety of the crystalization, &c. &c.—ever and anon calling upon Edith to support and assist him with her opinion upon the chilly subject. After this he would remark, “that water was the pure offspring of snow, and gradually arrive at a declaration that tea was the proper beverage of man, wondering how people could possibly drink anything stronger—just at the moment that the fumes of the last night’s debauch were issuing from his mouth.

Lady Hester, proud of her boy’s wit, never checked his humour, whilst Mr. Jones regarded him vacantly; or if he chanced to think of something relevant to the present, wondered “what son Fred. could mean by all those fine flourishes; while Captain Levison, attentive to every word

e, and occasionally embedding its talons  
ash. He carefully abstained from lending  
to Edith in the presence of her cousin,  
love of annoyance should rather be in-  
than diminished at her expense.

watched anxiously the moment when  
Hester drew out her plans for employing  
, and the gentlemen talked of riding,  
or otter-hunting; when she would slip  
the room, followed by Edith, and betaking  
themselves to their own apartment, suggest their  
amusement, neither of them being included  
in Hester's arrangements.

conversed together of times, and people,  
ings; or one read while the other worked;  
mounted on shaggy Welsh ponies, they visited

emerge from a covert or gorge hard in full fishing costume, ready to offer to the ladies in clambering the rocks their pencils with his penknife, or them to fresh scenery that he had on his fishing excursions, where they sat with his rod and line bending over stream; or reclining at length on the grass, busied in adjusting his fishing-tackle, or a captive from the subtle hook—thus designed to contrast the height of the mountains and depth of the precipices.

Frequently he guided the couriers through the rugged passes and difficult ascents, of the grandest mountains, and when wreathed around, forming a dewy nature's loveliness; or densely clouded, enfolded them in its grey mantle. The sheep, shaking their dripping fleece from the strange visitants, and anon, disgorged from the cloud, seemed to descend the steep steps. The wheatear's plaintive

he wilderness, as the kite of yellow claw  
aring the heavens on his out-stretched

limpses of animated nature woke the  
nd redeemed from a sense of utter  
those elevated regions.

nes they dwelt upon a bright green  
aptain Levison culled the daisies for  
leck her pony's head, or assisted Edith  
ng a butterfly, whose gaudy hues at-  
er admiration; and when the delicate  
ossamer robes were fully discussed,  
the fairies' favourite, they commended  
leys, where he should meet tiny knights  
fair, who, mounting, might guide him  
stores in choicest flowers, there to  
there to revel. If one with torn wings  
ded air rewarded her toilsome pursuit,  
evison decided it was a broken-down  
the fairy squires, which had long since  
d out to grass, and deserved little atten-  
the passing stranger; he prophesied



"is the very one he must inherit from a soulless parent."

"I perceive," returned Levison, "you have discovered my lineage; then let me tell you in what I am co-heir with the best of my sex, and give a listening ear and credence to my veracity. Beauty in woman evaporates, disclosing what the alchemy of years refined—the soul, the sense, the sentiment, without which there were no music in loneliness—it were but an empty, idle, listless word."

The cousins, bowing courteously to this complimentary speech, started a fresh topic.

In conversations like these, suggested by nature, they consumed the hours, and returned home invigorated with pleasing reminiscences and wholesome exercise. Rarely did Captain Levison accompany them back to the castle, conscious, one and all must be scorched if they came within range of Frederick and Emma's joint stock battery.

Levison generally diverged from the path, and

endeavouring to make amends for time beguiled, perseveringly lashed the floods, and replenished his baskets with the finny spoils.

It had become such a matter of course, whenever the cousins rambled at a distance from the castle, to meet the young soldier, that each felt her day's enjoyment sensibly diminished if he did not make his appearance, everything was divested of interest, objects they came especially to explore were totally forgotten, and frequently they employed the time redeemed from watching for him, in lauding his merits to each other.

Thus one morning they conversed together, sitting in a cove, formed by a semicircular range of crags, at the base of one of the highest mountains in the kingdom. It rose almost perpendicularly behind them; they gazed up dubiously at this vast superior one of the party, suspecting stone hardly deaf to their musings.

A superstitious feeling of the same kind caused Mary to sink her voice occasionally, while she

contemplated his rugged face, as if to note whether her words changed the expression of those everlasting furrows.

A broad and luxuriant valley stretched out before them; the horizon—bounded with hills that spired above each other, the nearest purple, the secondary blue and misty, and the third mingling with the clouds—closed the scene. Not the least beautiful feature in the landscape was a rapid river, that near them gurgled and foamed, and rose in its rocky bed as if disturbed with the harshness of its couch; dashing over the white pillow-stones, in desperate haste it fled repose, and pursued eternity.

Through many a placid mead—through many a verdant copse, and dark-green wood, it wound its hissing course. 'Twas a favourite river for the angler, where ruddy salmon, and starry trout of immense weight and fine flavour, rewarded the skilful master of the toils, amongst which the net ranked surest—the line most generous and popular.

"Angling is aye giving the fish a chance," an old and lowly stager of those parts; "thou neither fair play nor game in netting. I'd on the brim of the tide in my coracle from up till sun-down of life and light, and all time would not give my hand to a man who practise uncraftman-like tricks and devices at my brethren."

Idly flung aside were their sketch-books, sheltered by golden furze and thorn bushes; cousins confessed to each other they could not of them draw a line to-day.

Edith said, "Captain Levison taught pencil to excel itself; he tempted her on such pretty and just hints, that being carried gave quite a tone to the piece."

"Yes," said Mary, "his taste in my judgment is incomparable, and, for an officer is remarkably devoid of affectation and indelicacy."

"Dear Mary! what prudish remarks make? Why Captain Levison is just the

person we read of and hear officers always represented. He is frank, liberal, and gentleman-like, besides being handsome."

"Ah, Edith ! how little you know of the world. Captain Levison is more than you have described, and so I consider him the greater wonder ; he is intellectual and honourable."

"To be sure ! we always hear of soldier's honour ! This is their shield, their breast-plate, a substantive identified with valour and daring."

"Verily," said Mary, "a soldier in every sense of the word is a fine creature ; but the term is often grossly debased—rather applied to the livery than to the man. Talk of honour as the soul of that individual, who with one hand pays a gambling-debt as soon as preferred ; with the same shoots his friend for his own incautious and offensive language ; and at another time chooses to deny his tailor's bill, and vows he sha'n't have the money, or at any rate shall earn patience to his cost, because the fellow dared to dun him—the poor *artiste*, who has little or nothing besides

this laboured-for trifle, to meet the wants of a hungry family, or to liquidate long arrears of house-rent and wages.

“Again, Captain Levison is a very young officer, and young men in the army, if honours press around them, are soon spoiled—become affected, ridiculous, and imbibe a sovereign contempt for every other human animal under the sun. The dowagers adore their fortunes—the young ladies their red coats, and the young men (who belong generally to a superficial, frequently to an uneducated class), have, what is called, their heads turned; and thinking lightly of crime, or asserting the privilege they possess of doing evil with impunity, get their minds seared, and their hearts blackened.”

“What a dreadful picture of my valorous men!” exclaimed Edith, opening her eyes in incredulous astonishment at her cousin’s harangue.

“Mary, Mary! you can never make me think with you. I am a soldier’s daughter—a soldier’s grandchild; I’d put lance in rest, were you a

man, and I your brother heard you declare this."

"You may yet be a soldier's wife, Edith, and I need not desire better things for you, than that you may bless a man worthy of being the son-in-law of *sireage* like thine! I impeach not all soldiers; oh, no! they are our guard—our stay—worthy of honour and high commendation; but much of the admiration the posture excite to whom I allude, is purely owing to the novelty of costume, and the easy assurance of manners, with a certain French polish they have acquired, as superficial as their cloth, and which constitutes their attraction to school-girls; who I have heard conversing of their favourites in the most hyperbolical terms, and who make the strongest party among their advocates. These young ladies, leading their mammas, cause fashion to support the fraternity. Thus soldiers keep the field, to the terror of governesses, (especially Miss Mark), who proclaims their follies and faithlessness, and through whom I learned these lessons; which,

the more I see of life, the more I am inclined to believe founded on just premises. Carrying the subject, I take my brother's language (who is no great favourite of yours, Edith) as my guide for arriving at these conclusions. He has the off-hand bearing and courteous effrontery of the young officers he occasionally meets. Even at the morning parades, which they must attend, and when he votes rather "savouring of boar's flesh," he declares they have an easy unconstrained licence, where men need not be too nice.

Among these he jumbles certain tales of duels, debts, gambling, enacted, incurred, and figured in the lives of these "dear friends," these "good fellows," who form his acquaintance.

"You cannot love Frederick less for what he is going to say, Edith, which is—that I have a greater respect for Captain Levison because he is not a friend of my brother's, and was not introduced to this house through his means. Observe how silent he is, when Frederick broaches a theory he can't justify or support."



"Mary, can you divine what I have a long time thought, that my cousin Emma is very fond of Captain Levison? but I am sure it is not reciprocal; she gathers for him the prettiest flower in the conservatory, whilst he, in genuine gallantry, wears it till replaced by a fresh one. He always hands her in to dinner, and they chat together the whole meal, without interchanging a word with another person."

"And yet, do you know, Edith," said Mary quizzingly, "I have observed him terribly at fault when Frederick has been teasing you; and Emma quite in a pet at receiving wrong answers to some questions she had addressed to him."

"Indeed! you assert as much! well 'tis just like him; Captain Levison is so nice-minded, he cannot bear to see any one made uncomfortable."

"Edgar Levison (I may call him so in your hearing, Edith,)" remarked Mary emphatically, "is the most thoroughly amiable and loveable young man I have ever met."

"Did I hear my name just now?" said the object of their conversation, coming forward and looking from one to the other, as if uncertain which spoke last. "I hope I have not deserved comment from either of you, fair ladies?" he continued, affecting a disconsolate air, endeavouring to account for the blush that spread itself on his features.

Edith and Mary, taken wholly by surprise, could neither of them speak for some moments.

Edith's eye-lashes fell on her cheeks before the sufferer's piercing glance, and Mary pulled the laces to pieces ere she could summon resolution to address him. At length, recovering her self-possession, she began: "To ladies belongs the privilege of not answering questions, whereas gentlemen are bound by all the laws of chivalry to reply fairly to every query.

"From whence have you arrived just now? I was fishing, what sport have you had? I thought a riding-party was convened to-day, and conjectured you were enlisted."

I was ; but your sister's horse kicked .  
ce when she came to mount, and I  
er to forego the exercise, lest the  
ld endanger her life. Your sister is  
I escaped to enjoy this splendid view,  
desk for your sketching-books, if  
ow much have you done?" he asked,  
stly over the paper.

Levison!" shouted some one approach-  
s Frederick, who, accompanied by  
on, following a sheep-track, emerged  
the crags.

the way you fill your basket, worthy  
alton?—drawing out fine-spun from  
winding silk from the cocoon?  
ny fairest fair cousin ! Jack Barrett,  
and pitcher," lisped Frederick as he  
roup.

tt, taking off his hat, flourished it in  
he commencement of a set speech.  
ladies ; bracing weather ! just the  
ck-fighting !"

plucked and roast the minute he drop  
you never taste it, ma'am? better than a  
hare by the comb (if he has got any left)  
gizzard, which makes a capital *dièble*, as  
it in France. That reminds me of a tale  
will amuse you. Hearken, Fred., it is  
hearing.

"I went to dine with a friend of mine  
had a shooting box on the moors, and  
the most difficult task in the world to  
cook to live in such an out-of-the-way as  
some place, where her tongue grew rusty  
of a kindred gossip; so you can easily  
had no need to be over particular in the  
department, but was obliged to take  
could get. Well, this day he had a fine  
which was to come in at the proper time

ressed the lad who attended, and running in and out in the greatest haste. "Bring the grouse, boy,

or, easy a minnet; Sally says as how boiled yet!"

specimen of hill-cooking! I'll advise if they ever heard anything

and it was the first time she had tried. Edith said, she thought it tick, smacking his lips with a precision, laughed long and loud, and smiled facetiously.

Now, you know, as a natural consequence of another; and as you are a sportsman, here goes! I was hunting in the country with Chumley (you know Chumley is the best hunting-cattle in the country) and was left by the will of an old Don, to the sport and Chumley for doing it, and they never had seen each other in

the course of their lives)—well, he left Chumley a very high caste mare, Meg Merrilies—a border-bred and enduring little beast. She was bright bay, with black legs, with a dash of white on her forehead, and as clean as a razor, from end to end; a large roving eye, and equal to run the four miles without sob or sigh. She was not above fourteen three hands high, and Chumley just weighted her, for though long, he rides light. He tried her once across the country after a train scent; she held out gallantly, and when the heat was over looked about, as if cheated of the other half the day's sport.

“He had her led into the stable, and rated her highly in his own mind. Lord Ruford came for the season, and brought with him a clever looking beast, well up to sixteen stone.

“Ruford wagered him against the whole county. My lord's Doldrum was entered with little Meg; the swiftest hounds were selected from the pack—laid on—and straight a-head Doldrum bounced. It was the fairest thing I

w done—over all sorts of ground—no  
and taking off the wind—no heel-capping,  
reying. The horse was a stretcher. I  
to quake for my friend. Doldrum took  
edges like a grasshopper on a frosty  
ing; but Meg was soon even with him.  
ad a good bowl over an empty common;  
end was a high bank; the leap was a  
; and at the best of times baulked by the  
iest cattle. They came on at top speed;  
um heaved—caught the top of the bank  
his fore feet—Ruford fell heels over head!  
next instant Meg Merrilies perched on  
rum's back as he sprawled on the bank, and  
ging right over, cleared the ditch, to the  
and admiration of every beholder!  
ere never was such a thing seen before or  
! Had not Ruford lost his seat, he had cer-  
missed his life, as the mare's hind shoes  
printed on the saddle-croup.  
rd Ruford's narrow escape reminded Edith  
accident received while hunting—the effects

of which she had witnessed, and shuddering, she grew pale at the relation.

"My Lady Edith!" said Frederick, "not fired with admiration! but sickened at what was not a disaster."

"But what might have been," returned Edith, feelingly; "how can men, how dare men risk their lives in sport?"

"'Tis desperate to hunt—'tis wild to race—'tis mad, a steeple chase; so Edith would sing," drawled Frederick.

"Consider ma'am," persisted Barrett, "consider our heed of horses; they must be supported that must be kept up. To have the cattle the whole world envy us, fall to the ground would be, to be distanced before all nations—how would our soldiers be mounted?"

"And how would our sailors enjoy themselves after a cruise?" laughed Frederick.

"A capital story that, Fred. ! the best of the bunch; didn't you ever hear how Captain Blink of the Corbie, and Tickle got on, when they came



ashore? They hired a horse and gig to take them from Gravesend to Chatham to a party. Sailors not being over skilful with the ribbons, these necessary parts of steerage got entangled in the horse's tail, and taking head, off he bolted. It behoves me to tell they arrived at their destination in wonderful good time, luckily without an accident. Coming home, the beast was jaded—would not trot for lash or Blink.

“I say, says the Captain, Tickle, my spar! he came fast enough this morning. Suppose we rig him again in the same fashion? With this, they deliberately placed the reins under the horse's tail; up with his heels, and the splash-board hung in flitters. Dashing forward, the gig went to pieces at the one mile stone, and Blink and Tickle were spilled!”

“Come Jack Barrett,” said Frederick, as soon as he recovered from the mirth this tale occasioned, “you have broken cover three several times this morning, come now, hold to the true scent—hunting, forsooth! back your best horse.

Ever since you started on that course my sister Mary has been getting up the steam, and I expect presently will go off, full puff, and overrun. You are a Pan for hunting; come, polish your metal, and stand by your character."

"I throw down this gauntlet," said Mary smiling, "and defy you, or any one to take it up with success—that hunting is not a gentlemanly or a necessary, or a wholesome exercise."

"Well done, sister Polly, if you support me in brief, I shall declare you worthy of the lord high chancellorship."

"Upon your very outset, Miss Mary, I unharbour three of the easiest rundown theories that ever engaged the attention of sportsmen. As to hunting being a gentlemanly exercise, do you see the first people in the land press the stirrup and the chase?"

"This does not prove it chaste, you would say, Mary," said Frederick interrupting.

"Frederick, when I address you 'tis time to be facetious."

"True, Mary, Barrett is your quarry now."

"Don't men of letters throw aside the parchment for recreation of this sort? Are not the rich its principal supporters?"

"Mr. Barrett," returned Mary, "mighty men and proud men, gentlemanly men (in the world's acceptance of the word) literary men, rich men, amiable men and noblemen, join in the sport which neither tends to mend their manners nor their morals. A large concourse of opposite station, rank, and character mingle in the field. Jokes and whips are cracked, the rough pun is spun into a yarn that entangles each individual, the horse-laugh detonates along the ranks, and all are good fellows, and fine fellows, and jovial fellows on the turf, who would not be seen on the same pavé exchanging compliments for millions."

"So far Mary proves it excellent, as such relaxation of tongue and temper helps men to brace up tighter when they return to the lists of propriety to strive for prudish fame."

"That is not among the worst things you have said, Frederick, in the course of your life ; I believe the original character of man to be so imperfect, that without a burst of this kind, the time thus occupied might be engaged in brewing mischief to themselves and others."

"Then is it necessary," asserted Barrett, "the breed of horses is supported ; money is spent which lends aid to the poor ; and the offensive species (termed vermin) are kept under, or eradicated."

"With regard to the latter proposition, I think otter hunting a justifiable engagement, and nothing cruel in destroying a pest ; but to import foxes for the purpose of deliberate pursuit is something as cruel as it is absurd and novel, and silences all men who talk of the reynard nuisance ! To *unbag* a fox, hunt him down, re-capture him (as I have known done,) and reserve for another run, is the way of your soft satin waistcoats, and tough leathern hearts. Fool's fun ! barbarous !"

"Well, Miss Mary, you are dumb upon the

support of the breed ; and I take this as the first and best object of hunting, racing, &c. Do you say nothing ; well now, won't you give in at last to the belief that it is a wholesome exercise ? Men are induced to take the air, and early habits and hours are the result."

" Of this last I believe it to be one of the most unwholesome. Miss Dorothea Macklin told me, upon the authority of a clever and respected author, that hunting is the most fertile cause of sudden death. The circulation is too rapid, owing to the violence of the exercise, and disease of the heart is the common issue. If we consider the health of your horse, he may be a noble animal before he is backed, but from that moment he loses the symmetry of his proportions, though wise men among you declare they ought to wear well and keep the sounder for exercise, and that every good master should seek a gap with the view of harbouring his horse's strength to avoid overtaxing his muscular energies ; yet how is it (borrowing your own terms) that broken knees,

splints, curbs, spavins, wind-galls, &c. belong especially to the hunter, and mark out the poor beast invariably from other horses?"

"Now let us consider in what way the mind of man is improved by this exercise. We read constantly of school-boys being brought before magistrates, and lectured, and fined severely for hunting cats, with intent to do the said animal grievous bodily harm; and yet these very men who preach to the little boys, are to be seen immediately after a grave exhortation of this kind, shouting, 'Tally-ho!' and following a hairy creature, with rather a larger tail than a cat, and properly included in the canine, not the feline species; besides, gentlemen, (I would have you hear it with attention rather than irreverence) why is profanity of conversation the licence of the turf? 'Tis an inspiring exercise to people who do not consider any of these things; it is the most ancient we have; but our fathers carried it on for food and the extermination of nuisances."

Whilst Mary spoke, Captain Levison regarded

her with startled attention, and when she concluded, declared himself a convert to her principles.

"Take care, Levison," said Frederick, "think twice before you give up hunting. Men should never do so unless they are in love, when they may promise anything, and fulfil nothing when it comes to the push."

"What theories to practise from, Frederick; I hope your conscience does not quite assent to what your tongue asserts," remarked his sister.

"As Mary has proved *clearly*," said Edith smiling, "that hunting is a most intellectual exercise, I would have no one dispense with it who thought his mind might lie fallow for want of this stimulus to cultivation."

"Mirabila! my fascinating saga! I greet thee, worthy pupil of *little Polly*," enjoined Frederick, bringing a drawled-out commencement to an abrupt and ridiculous termination, so as to make the whole party laugh together.

"Do you know, Minny," he continued, "I

have serious notions, drawn from symptoms, induced by natural action, that your third molars ~~dentis sapientie~~, (commonly called wisdom teeth) have been cut. Take my advice and don't work them too much, or they may cut you, seeing how you are young to become *laggish*; or they may turn blue-black if you practise with such ~~dentifrice~~ as you have been giving us a specimen of."

"We might all benefit by the application," suggested Levison, "and I, for one, will adopt it."

"Then the next thing, I'd advise you to expedite the arrival of your wedding-dress from the tailor's, and after that I engage to accommodate you by ordering your shroud from the undertaker. I'll do more—I'll promise to be groom's man ~~from~~ the first instance, and chief mourner over you and your follies in the next."

"Make me dentist to the queen's palfrey, and I'll tell you his age to a month, even if the mark is out of his mouth," said Barrett, pluming himself upon his skill in horse-flesh; "but with the



human saw-pit I have no chance, and might be reduced to so much dust by meddling with its enginea."

"Or ingenious filing," prompted Frederick. "Aye, aye, my boy! you wear the right complexion."

"Show me a more beautiful creature than the race-horse," added Barrett, "a more noble and thorough-paced animal than the hunting-horse!"

"The charger!" said Edith and Levison in a breath.

"They are raised in our stables, grazed on our pastures," boasted Barrett.

"And made India-rubber in the riding-school," concluded Frederick.

"To bear a nobler burden—a soldier defending his queen and country—than an overgrown school-boy seeking a brush among brambles," retorted Mary.

"Chere petite!" continued Frederick, "I see I shall have to feel your pulse if the fever runs much higher, decided scarlet! What a thing to

have the giving her away to a red-coat," he soliloquized.

"'Tis cold, I think we had better walk," said Mary, blushing.

"Poor Minny shivers; the prognosis is determined!"

Edith declined Captain Levison's arm, and Frederick offered her the "wing of a goose."

"She does not like the fowl," whispered Levison.

"More than the fish in armour—lobster, forsooth!" retorted Frederick.

The ladies declared they could take care of themselves, and thus accompanied, arrived in the castle hall, where they encountered an opposite party—Miss Elfrida and Dorothea Macklin, who had just arrived upon a visit, and Emma, with Lady Hester at their head.

They were intent upon making a sally upon the flower garden, "in quest of roses long vanished from their cheeks!" suggested Frederick to his friend Jack Barrett, who, smoothing his chin with

his hand, started, as if stung by the contact, modestly signifying the weapons the elderly ladies bore.

Miss Dorothea sighed a dreadful "Oh! the horror!" as she spied Jack Barrett; and Miss Macklin, patronizingly, held out her hand to Levison—"Captain Edgar, how do you do?"

Edith and Mary kept close together; and Emma "hoped Captain Levison had entertained himself since she had liberated him in the morning."

Levison asked, "what could she mean? what did she mean?"

Emma smiled coquettishly, and said, "she would not tell her cavalier," praying him, "like a dear delightful creature, to make up for the loss she had sustained in his absence, by devoting himself from henceforth to her service."

"This is coming it rather strong," thought Levison to himself; "I must either propose, or file off."

## CHAPTER III.

O give him not to wear,  
Your rings of braided hair;  
Without this fuss  
He'll think of us;  
His heart—he has us there.

C. WOLFE.

Edith, Mary, and Frederick paraded a broad stone terrace, that stretched along the south front of Gwyn Dinas, affording a delightful walk, warm and dry, when every other spot in the open air was unpleasant from the dampness of the weather.

Edith held a letter, which she regarded with an affection and earnest thoughtfulness only bestowed

upon letters to those we love. She watched for the post-boy, into whose bag she proposed slipping (with her own hand) the treasured packet, too fond to entrust it to other delivery. Her papa, her darling papa, should press it soon—the very paper she now regarded !

It contained a message to dear old Nelly ; it spoke of Meteor ; and, oh, how many other hallowed sentiments crowded those pages ! Home and its attendant sweets engaged the fair girl's reflections, her eyes sparkling, and lips pouting, tell-taled the pleasure that warmed her breast.

Mary occupied Frederick in a discussion ; of its purport Edith was wholly unconscious, until Lady Hester's voice at the window, calling, " Mary, my love !"—Edith and her cousin Frederick were left together.

Mary approached Lady Hester's boudoir with greater haste than usual, owing to the term of endearment that guided her to her mother's chamber.

" She looks very well to-day, she is a pretty

creature," soliloquized Lady Hester, still standing before the window, when Mary entered; "don't you think so, child?"

"Yes, mamma," said Mary with an emphasis, "I do indeed."

"Sit down, my dear, I want to have a little conversation with you. You think her a tame gentle creature, and easily led?"

"By one she loves," answered Mary, puzzled at Lady Hester's purpose.

"Oh that comes after marriage; the thing is, get her in the mood to say yes; I'll take care to prevent retraction. Do you think she likes Frederick?"

"Edith Leslie can't endure my brother."

\* It is not of much consequence in some respects if she does not *adore* him (in romance phraseology); but don't say 'can't endure!' We must make her."

"Impossible."

"It is to be attempted, and you must assist in this grand scheme."

Mary was silent.

"Hear me patiently, and you will enter into my feelings. Frederick has ogled and flirted with the great heiress Miss Paulina Smythe (I believe Polly Smith is her real name) until he has worried her and himself. In plain terms, she has refused him ; the girl is so carried away by the compliments puppies pay her, that she has learned to rate her charms higher than her gold. Poor fool ! she'll find this to her cost by and bye. Cary Hopkins is just engaged to be married ; Emma Darleville he declares no go ; she's too pretty and rich for him. So Frederick stands a chance of being left in the lurch ; or, what would be ten times worse, might fall into the snares of a pretty designing girl—a plain miss—who would marry him from mercenary motives, and perhaps lead poor Fred. a shocking life as soon as she had attained her end. I have a serious objection to marrying a title, for he could not get one with fortune, and I should have no control over my son or his lady wife.

“Now if he married Edith Leslie, she will be something pretty, say two thousand a-year to begin with, and Malvern in prospective. Frederick would be made happy, and I continue to influence both. Edith must submit to my opinion in everything, and I should be the mother of a fair daughter and steady son. I will not hide from you what I fear, partly as you are arrived *near* an age of discretion, I must confess that I dread, if Frederick goes many more years unmarried, he will be so forming so virtuous a connection, become a roué than ever, and I shall die miserable, leaving his father's house and fortunes without heir, and my daughters injured by this. “ their brother's; as, be assured, nobody will be courting poor girls in these outlandish parts when the mother is taken away, who gives them precedence through her superior birth and pretensions. Now is the time to improve your opportunity. I'd advise hay to be made while the sun shines. If your brother marries judiciously, you will



his house where to meet eligible matches ; but if this event be not hastened, I cannot answer for the regularity of an establishment under his management, particularly should your father survive his wife ; for the old man would only laugh at the domestics smoking fitches of bacon up the drawing-room chimney, or eating red-herrings in the breakfast-parlour.

“Imagine the dogs kennelled in this my pet chamber ; the howling brutes looking up at these family portraits, presuming familiarity with men at whose names they would sneak away, as their masters had done before them ! Gaze round, Mary, upon this ancient pedigree, and let not what your mother brought as her marriage portion be squandered by her children—cast to the hounds ! Assist me in this great scheme, and you will gain everything for yourself and Frederick. The dear fellow is desperately in love with this girl ; he has acknowledged as much to me in private. See there, how earnestly he is conversing with her, I am glad they are left alone !”

do you mean to speak to my father seated, miss, directly ; would you break your brother's heart ?”

“ Frederick never had such an appetite about as much as an apple, absolutely new to the economy of the fruit, but not active in any other province, or tolerable to the taste.”

“ Mary, you are getting saucy ; is this how you presume upon my freedom, and all my confidence ?”

“ Mother, I would not willingly offend you, but I can answer for Edith's never, never marrying Frederick ! ”

“ Are you then the porte-feuille of her letters ? does she favour another ? ”

“ No,” said Mary, blushing ; “ but she likes to keep her letters better than

agitated in her turn, "this must never be! I hope to see Edgar and Emma united before long."

Mary's colour deepened, and she pressed her shoulders against the chair to arrest the trembling that seized her.

"I must send him to his regiment; he told me yesterday his leave was nearly expired; I petitioned him to get a codicil tacked to it. I was wrong. I shall solicit the subject this very night, (as if accidentally) and hold out no inducement to his remaining after he speaks of the length of his visit. This will do—he can return again when the coast is clear, and Emma shall have him all to herself. He has become an excellent match since the death of an old aunt; his family, you know, is good, and the young man inherits an aristocratic bearing. Don't you think so, Mary?"

"Yes, mamma," whispered Mary falteringly.

"I have obtained a good deal of information, for which I am indebted to you, Polly!"

"Then I am at liberty?"

"Not quite so fast, my love ! Just now they seem to have quarrelled. I would not have you appear until they make it up."

Edith walked with another step, her head erect, and mouth firmly closed ; she seemed to look upon Frederick with proud dislike, whilst he, unabashed, inclined his body towards her in earnest parlance.

"These little things make lovers of the most disinterested ! I would not spoil their sport for worlds ! what, if this be a crisis ? Again, Mary, listen to me. First, draw down the blind—you will attend better. It is my desire (and a thinking being must see the good to be derived)—it is my wish, that you, in conversations with your cousin, lead her mind towards Frederick's fortune, his station in the county, and whatever you think will enhance him in Edith's opinion. Spare not pains, and I prophesy that a rich reward is in store for you."

"These are no allurements to Edith, she is quite a different stamp from what you imagine."

"Hut, tut! child, isn't she flesh and blood like other women, and similarly constituted with girls of her age—ready to give her hand to the first person who offers? They are won by the novelty of the attention. In a few years time, Frederick could not get her, so high an opinion will the lassie acquire of her personal attractions. She has had no one to extol them hitherto."

"This is the very way to disgust Edith, or any feeling mind. Have you ever conversed with her?"

"No, my dear; and it is such a considerable time since I completed my education, that I have forgotten the routine questions for school-girls; and without these I might as well address my lap-dog. Isn't it so?"

"I hope not, mamma; certainly Edith is an instance to the contrary."

"But I forget—she never went to school; no, I remember—her mother had some ridiculous and crude notions about public education, and shut herself up, all the days of her life, to set literary

tasks for this girl, and tend her flower garden. The poor nephew was brought into such habits that he feared he will never overcome them. Perhaps it is as well, for if he loved going abroad more, the daughter would stand a chance of having a mother set over her, and her fortune be diminished by other little claimants starting up. If I marry Frederick, my aim will be to keep him as father as he is, and put no lady *Likely* in his place. An objection arises to his coming here—those maids would set their caps at him, if it were only to show what chickens they think themselves.

“This might have a bad tendency, as it is calculated to break down his celibic principle by directing his thoughts towards matrimony. ’tis more than probable he would not wish to live with Edith, and Frederick would take up his quarters at Malvern, which would suit him better for civility and be a change for us occasionally to have them a visit.”

“Now, Mary, this is all in your power to be about; a glorious harvest lies before you;

it, and you'll deserve being crowned queen of the feast. Who knows but a neat little beau might start up to reward you for your pains!"

"Mamma, I must speak plainly; to deceive you will neither become me nor advantage you. If I thought it possible that Edith might be brought to tolerate my brother, I would then consider the propriety of sacrificing her to him; but as it is, I am firmly convinced in my own mind that what you have entered upon is altogether a vain speculation."

"How different you are to your mother, Mary! I never give in till I am obliged."

"And I never should set out, Lady Hester, my mother, upon a chase of this kind, particularly for a young man whom I cannot respect."

"Pooh! child, what are men in the world? she may get hold, or rather a worse man than Frederick may get hold of the girl. Frederick's irregularities are those of millions of young men of his class. He is not a dishonourable man, or a drunkard; that is, he never gets beyond senti-

mental, and that only occasionally. This is a light charge against him, and does not deserve notice; but, we are wasting words upon trifles. I have been thinking that you should accompany Edith to Malvern, instead of returning to school, and remain till we all join you in a couple of months."

"This is indeed joyful news!" cried Mary, clapping her hands in ecstasy.

"Remember our bargain."

Mary's countenance fell.

"Remember my warning, mother! and do not place too much reliance"——

"Upon this alliance—you would say. If I were the child's guardian, by fair means or foul, she should marry Frederick. But don't be unnecessarily alarmed, Mary. We can only chuse fair means. She is a pet you know at home."

"And are these fair means?" thought Mary within herself.

"Stop a moment, my love!" said Lady Hester, rising, "I have a little cadeau for you."



She took from a casket a *sevigné*—a golden cord, clasped on one side with an eagle's claw, designed in the same costly metal, supported in the centre a crescent of diamonds: it was a unique and precious ornament, left off since Lady Hester had taken refuge in head-dresses, and although once or twice tried upon Emma, it was decided by that young lady, her lady's-maid, and mamma in conclave, that so rich an ornament might attract too much attention to her forehead, which was small, and not formed for it—more like that of the Roman women, and a model for a sculptor. Thus the *sevigné* was adjudged misbecoming to her.

As neither mamma nor eldest daughter could wear it, there appeared an ultimate probability that Mary would come in for the reversion.

Mary knew all this, but appearing to forget the detail, extolled its taste and design, declaring the souvenir too handsome for her. She had rather never have accepted this memorial of a secret and painful conversation; she felt it was

presented as a sort of signet to a com which her mind revolted, and her tongue to express all this. She was spell-bound presence of her mother. Lady Hester never understand her feelings, and to represent would be to occasion a desperate between them.

With a smile on her lip, and a weight heart, she appropriated the ornament ; and it from her own eyes in a deep drawer, where prayed it might slumber for ever, Mary, vouring to subdue rising tears and eloquence, hastened to join her cousin.

There were moments when this sensitive sighed for a lonesome place to plead for sorrows. Oh, the most lonely, desolate upon earth could not be more dreary than her breast at this hour. Sobs might relief, and were the companions she would confess with agony that she loved Edgar—to implore strength from on high to this truth from others—to behold, with c

his partiality for Edith—to assist him in his object against her dearest wishes—and to act honourably towards this much loved cousin and rival, in connection with her brother Frederick—a terrible concert of griefs that ached, holy desire, pent up in fruitless silence and trembling fears—drove the stricken Mary nigh desperation. Soon, however, those stronger sentiments of faith and conscientiousness stemmed the turgid tide against her, and the features of her countenance settled in pale calm. She would not allow herself to consider for a moment the desirable situation of things possibly to be gained by coaxing Edith to think of her brother, and smoothing his way to her possession. She felt a sense of pleasure occasionally at the prospect of Levison's being removed, (so far on her own account) that she could not bear the idea of his being united to Emma; and this might delay the treaty. She wished Edith to become his wife, in preference to *another*; and if he cared for her cousin, this movement might probably lead to a discovery of

his feelings, either through words, or glances expressive.

"What is the matter, my own Mary, my dearest friend!" said Edith, who had run to her cousin.

"A slight indisposition—the air will do me—nothing, love, of any consequence. What have you been doing, Mr. Frederick?"

From him to Edith's face, where were traces of violent emotion.

"It is past—he has promised never to mention it. What notice you take of my missy," said Edith, laughing hysterically.

"I—I—I," stammered Frederick.

"Why really that fellow is a perfect idiot," interrupted Levison, joining the group, "an opportunity of taking Frederick off his feet."

"Ladies! I am come to bid you farewell. We have just received a special order to join the regiment; there are riots in the town where we are quartered."

"Must you then leave us?" said Edith

knowing what she uttered, and seeing Mary crimson to her temples. "Did you know he was going so soon, Mary? Why did you not tell me?" concluded Edith, in a melancholy key.

Mary, absolutely at a loss how to answer, remained silent, her colour deepening as the pause was prolonged.

"Have you any commands I can execute?" inquired Levison; "be assured, Miss Leslie, I shall fulfil them to the best of my power."

"My letter to papa!" said Edith, with animation; "you can put it in the post-office as you pass through ——; I'd rather you would take it than the post-boy."

"Would Miss Leslie prefer that I should convey it to its destination?"

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Edith, "were that practicable."

"At E——, just fifteen miles distant from **Malvern**, my troop is quartered; it will be a **delightful** ride; and since you have given me **leave**, I shall certainly take the earliest oppor-

tunity of presenting my credentials to Mr. Leslie, whose good opinion no one is more ambitious of gaining."

Edith thanked the young soldier cordially, and adding several verbal messages to his mission, Levison shook hands warmly with the party, and left them, on his way to Lady Hester's boudoir, where he purposed tapping with his knuckles, to intimate a strange approach, and having explained his reasons to his hostess for his abrupt departure, to sally forth on his route.

A rapid and wordy conversation was carried on within Lady Hester's apartment, preventing Captain Levison's signal from being heard, although repeated several times. At length he struck up a well-measured march, which had the effect of attracting the attention of the inmates; and coughing intentionally to confuse the sound and sense of a few diplomatic last words, Lady Hester requested the musician "to walk in."

Lady Hester and her eldest daughter betrayed considerable embarrassment as the subject of their

colloquy stood before them. Then Emma made a bashful attempt to escape.

"Say good bye, Miss de Winter, before you retire," requested the soldier, intercepting her flight.

"You are surely not going on so short a notice," she replied with some surprise.

"You cannot trespass on your leave any further—is it true?" added Lady Hester; "I am sure we are very sorry to lose you, but I hope you will return for the first of September. Of course Frederick has engaged your promise?"

"Thank you, Lady Hester, I am most sensible of your kindness. Frederick has indeed enlisted me; an official communication commands my prompt attendance at head-quarters, where the regiment is engaged, subduing riots; and Miss Leslie's letter, with which I am entrusted, is another obligation to my speedy departure."

"Edith's letter!" interrupted Lady Hester, changing colour and tone, "what of it?"

"Simply this—she prefers my giving it into

her father's hand to the post-boy's relinquishing the packet at the post-office. 'Tis a high honour to bestow upon me, of which I shall take a pleasing advantage—the introducing myself to Mr. Leslie."

"Oh! is that all? I am sure the delay cannot be felt by Edith, particularly as the post will convey her letter to its destination with infinitely greater precision, if dispatch is required. Yes, let it go by post—you must remain one day Captain Levison—only one little day longer! You cannot have the face to deny me? Admiral Sir Leonard Willoughby and Lady Willoughby arrive to-night—I want to introduce you. Besides, you know, you are their relative, although neither have had the good fortune to become acquainted. They are delightful people! You remember often desiring this meeting, and why fly from a great pleasure near at hand?"

"My colonel advises dispatch. I must neither sully my name, nor shun my duty as a soldier. Nor would you, upon consideration, recommenp



me to risk the loss of Mr. Leslie's friendship, which I have sanguine hopes of acquiring ; as no words burn more than those of a lovely, loving daughter to a fond and indulgent parent."

"Surely a lover's sentiments towards his mistress are more tenderly expressed," simpered Emma.

"So scorching, Paddy tells me," laughed Levison, "that paper cannot contain them ; it smoulders away at the bare sight of the pen. But as this is out of my line altogether, it would be culpable in me to neglect so great and certain a treat as lies within my reach. I shall be called on to explain how Miss Leslie enjoys herself here, and how she looks ; and who is so capable of reviewing the delights of Gwyn Dinas, the suavity of its hostess, and fair association?" bowing to Emma.

After an exchange of civilities on both sides, Captain Levison took his departure. Intently Lady Hester regarded the closing door, and listened till the soldier's tread sounded no longer,

when, starting to her feet, with a violent gesture of rage and disappointment, she paced the room like one frantic, her anger ever and anon exploding in characteristic reproaches against herself and the wiles of fate.

“He’s gone! he’ll get introduced to Mr. Leslie—he’ll have the freedom of Malvern—he’ll ask the girl’s hand of her father! The best match in the country leaves Gwyn Dinas to-day. I have lost him—thrown him away! Fool that I have been, to sleep with one eye, and think that my other was sufficient to enforce my wishes, and compass my interests! He would not be delayed, or I hoped to wrest that letter from him—to place it out of his keeping. I have failed—lost time, the volume of events, developed against me! My eldest daughter is doomed to a single life, or must take up with a poor curate, the dernier resort of all country feminines of good family, and small fortune. Emma will become popular as a teacher of the little once-washed at the Sunday school, and finally support the

interests by marriage with the surpliced head master !”

“Never, mamma, never ! I’d expire first,” said Emma indignantly, tears of vexation starting to her eyes.

“I forgot you were in the room, child ; but no matter ! You have heard my warning—heed it ! You must assist me ; we must all strive to make an impression upon the little chit before she leaves this house. If it be not effected now, it can never take place hereafter. The task to be pursued is, to pet and pamper her ; you especially must overcome, or conceal, your natural jealousy, and by soft looks and fair speeches turn her aside from thinking of your beau.”

“Mother ! I call you to witness, so long as I live, I shall never like that girl but as a sister in legal law. Oh, my love ! to behold thee wedded to a Leslie, would be to break my heart and bury my fondest hopes !” exclaimed Emma, wringing her hands. “Could Edgar prefer another before me ? especially one so young and inexperienced ?

Too improbable ! too ridiculous ! It is at variance with his common sense."

"You forget his admiring senses in the plural, and (of course) predominating number. You overlook how very handsome she is, &c. &c." said Frederick, joining the circle, prepared with fuel to excite the fire that burned in the midst, scarcely singeing him, for whose amusement it rather appeared kindled, so impalpable and indefinite were his feelings on the subject.

Lady Hester and her daughter divided a blister between them that rose with every chafing word.

"I am half mad, mother," continued Frederick, "I might as well cut my throat, or shoot myself, or take prussic acid, for Edith is lost to me from this hour."

"You're a faint-hearted urchin," said Lady Hester, endeavouring to laugh off her son's disquietude.

"No," he continued, deliberately reclining on the sofa, "your judgment is premature. I have no affection of the heart," putting his hand to his

right side ; “ my liver is in fault, if any part of my internal economy ; I feel a twinge here occasionally, and a certain tinge of the sublime steals under my eyelid at times, and the glass tells me I am bilious. But this is little to the purpose. I want to speak of the fair lady, our niece and cousin, and to arrange with you the best death to adopt at an emergency.”

“ A truce to folly, and explain yourself, Frederick ! ” replied Lady Hester authoritatively.

“ Why, mother mine ! there is no necessity for getting out of temper ; you perceive how patiently I bear my trials.”

“ Then, sir, I pray you will proceed at your leisure.”

“ I was going without this advice. About suicide—cutting one’s throat is an ugly and uncomfortable operation, an effectual mode of marring a pretty corpse. Hanging is out of the question ; it has grown vulgar, since servant girls have appropriated this particular way of going out of the world ; and garters have been

used in preference to pocket-handkerchiefs, which are known to attend upon a higher portion of the person. Shooting is out of the question, as I shun the idea of exposing my brains to the public. Prussic-acid, like other poisons, leaves a savage expression upon the features, which spoils the whole thing, and does away with the heroism of the act. Smothering won't do at all, as your cheeks acquire a distended configuration and a very unbecoming purple complexion. Drowning I could not do *well*, as the streams are not deep enough in this part of the world, and the rocks might deface my face, whilst half the retaliation upon one's enemies is—being identified."

"What do you think of deliberately starving yourself? You would be able, by consulting the glass daily, to enjoy a long time satisfactory prospects of your final dissolution."

"Dishonourable, Emma—palpably dishonourable! the last act of a man's life should not be mean one; and what would this be but cheating the undertaker in a certain number of equal

inches in the proportions of a coffin suitable to my attenuated form. It comes to this—I must advertise, offering a premium for the discovery of a new mode of appropriating one's self. Do you think they will answer me? I shall request letters post-paid, directed to F. T. L.—*Fred. tired of life*—to be sent to the post-office, and left till called for. If I could take out a patent upon the invention, I might preserve it unique, and this would be a material point gained.

“Now, mamma, since I see you industriously engaging your fingers and extraneous thoughts upon the variegated lines in that silk purse, I can talk without much exertion to either of us, about the little girl I have chosen for myself.”

“Keep these principles, my boy, and be assured you shall win her.”

“That is not what I am just so very sure of; C. G. A. C. (*country girls are coy*). The soldier fellow, Levison, has walked off with a letter of credit to E.'s governor. 'Pon my wits, I felt

inclined to wash my hand in that milk-and-water countenance of his !”

“Frederick! what do you mean?” asked Emma angrily.”

“I forgot, my dear, that he was the cream of your thoughts. Forgive your brother, and send me wedding cake as soon as possible, that I may devour your happiness. I flattered and wheedled Edith to give me the packet, and swore I’d place it safely in young Calomel’s letter-bag. She declared she must see him herself. I warmed and protested she might intrust the billet-doux as soon as herself to me. I respected the letter as the offspring of her hand, which was, in my eyes, a fair type of herself. She desired me not to talk nonsense. I told her, if she gave the pretty *fives* to my keeping, I would treasure them next to my own life. “Before it, or never” she shouted, in ecstatic merriment. “Before for ever !” I added, seizing the lily-white packet and endeavouring to kiss it.

“She plucked the swan’s feather from my



leaving this large ring in the struggle. 'Pon my life I thought I should have had my ears boxed black and blue, she looked so savage. Immediately afterwards Levison came up, and the carrier-dove had the letter tacked to him, with a pretty flowing ribbon of silver sentiments, quite enough, I should say, for wedding favours."

Frederick had mounted the ring on his little finger. "It is her own by all that's lovely," he exclaimed, opening a locket within the face, which he had not discovered before. A golden hair described the letters E. L. On the reverse was a star of diamonds, set in a blue sky.

"Emblematic of her lustre and purity. I'll tell her so, and make her blush as deep as a michaelmas daisy. I'll have a bit of fun with my lollipop mistress for this. See! won't I?" considered Frederick, whistling.

"Out of place, Frederick my dear, are those sounds. I am willing to listen to your love-  
tales, but not to the carter-clod's musical instruments."

"That's a whip, mother," retorted Frederick.

"What you want laid about your shoulders," laughed his mother.

"To conclude my story, Minny, looking saws and pincers at me, spirited away my heroine."

"Perhaps 'tis as well she did so," said Lady Hester. "You have now an opportunity of returning the ring, with a tender speech, get up for the occasion."

"Madame, vous avez raison," returned Frederick; "but I came to propose that you would either send back to school Miss Molly Marple or tie her by the leg until I got the better of Edith's scruples. She is always in our way, and I strongly suspect, concocts mischief against my delectable brother, my very self."

Have patience, dear Frederick, and leave this part of the business to me. Mary has voted to assist your suit. I have bribed her. Consider the want of policy of your proposal: if I sent Mary to school (which I would not hesitate in

doing to serve each our purpose, though she is over and above eighteen this minute) we should all lose the quarry directly ; as I verily believe Edith could not be prevailed upon to remain here a single day after her pet Mary had been removed. Moreover, I have promised that if Mary behave well, in her *conjunctive* department, she is to accompany Edith to Malvern, where we shall take *both* up (I hope) in the autumn."

"I am afraid Polly will prove the disjunctive conjunction ; she is a clever little mouse, and knows how to nibble a biscuit to her taste, but I defy her to help me to a bit."

"And why is this ?" said Emma tartly.

"Because I tease her, you would hint, Miss Emma, and she 'taliates justifiably. No, for one great wonder, I will speak against myself. Mary has not a particle of revenge in her composition ; but she thinks Edith too good for me. I believe she's right, and on this account she would separate us."

"Nonsense, boy! you are as handsome a fellow as a woman need have for a husband; you have a purse without a hole in it."

Frederick jumped up and ran towards the glass. "I wish I had a tooth without a hole in it," he said, surveying himself from head to foot. "My dexter cheek is swoln from the pain of an old ivory I am loth to part with, the separation will cost us so dear."

"Say tomb-stone, and you approach the truth more nearly."

"As you like, gentle Emma; your grace sentiment overpowers me; but to return to my beauty," he continued, tying a more becoming knot in his neckcloth, "I am not handsome. I am good-looking; all my family were before me. There's a mouth for a kiss, or a cigar! an eye for a fox's brush or a lover, and a leg for a silk stocking," he concluded, pointing his toe, and dancing affectedly out of the room, followed by the ringing laugh of his admiring parent.

## CHAPTER IV.

My own friend—my own friend!  
 There's no one like my own friend:  
     For all the gold  
     The world can hold  
 I would not give my own friend.  
C. WOLFE.

“Edith, love, it is damp and cold, you must not remain any longer in the open air,” said Mary, endeavouring to persuade her cousin to retire within her chamber.

Edith leaned over the solid stone balcony with which each of the upper windows in the castle was provided.

Her hair, loosed from its bands, in negligent

waiting for her maid, who was presently expected to dress it, hung over her shoulders in disorderly tresses, its beautiful hue tarnished by the dew that moistened every single hair, and dripped from the ends all around her like a dropping well.

"'Tis delicious," said Edith, shaking her ringlets; "I never am guilty of such an indiscretion as taking cold. Don't interrupt my enjoyment for a while. If I can't see Captain Levison through your provoking Welch flannel, at least will you enjoy these few *dégagés* moments the fog that suits my temperament."

"Who ever looked on those lips, those eyes and shining tresses, and talked or thought of gloom, except in dull weather?"

"There now, Mary, you remember me of my precious foster-mother, who used to say that the fairies told her, when I was a wee thing, to drink sweet-briar tea before she sang to me a lullaby, that the fragrance of her sounds breathing on her nursling might chase away my doleful spirit; lest haply I had gathered a d

leaf (emblem of sadness) in the bright happy garden I came from to this lower world, and which was the counteracting spell that, she said, accounted for my complexion and temper. Once dear old Nelly dreamed that on a day so sunny and mild as she never knew one on this earth, herself carried her darling on a rose-leaf cushion through the air, whilst happy angels tied flowers fresh culled in paradise, and raised her precious burthen with those scented pulleys to a higher heaven than she was destined for. She kissed me before she left me to the angel-band, and from that moment felt herself going down—down—down ; her eyes were on the cushion still, when the night came on, and wrapped her in its dingy mantle. How do you think she interpreted this ? First, that I should die a baby, and she should lose me from her arms ; secondly, (having survived this age,) that she should be the peculiar instrument of my good fortune, and leave me in great bliss when she should go out of the world. I am superstitious, and I sometimes

think it will be so. To lose the lamp that covered the treasure—darkness near to me must come over me! Oh may she shine whilst I trim and guard the declining wick.

Tears fell from Edith's eyes, and Nioh her woe never looked more melancholy so fair.

"You are in low spirits, my friend, in the events and the gloom of this day and both," said Mary, embracing her cousin. They wept on each other's bosom.

An audible sob at no great distance disturbed the soft union. Edith, agitated, surveyed the air. Was it an angel's sigh? she trembled whilst she could discover no object in the air that could give rise to their eyrie.

"What was that?" she whispered in a low voice. Mary pressed her hand and sprang with her to the apartment.

"Haste, Edith, don't you see?"

Once more Edith endeavoured to pierce the fog, looking out before her with straining eyes.



wondering eyes. She gazed upwards—the blue heavens were shut out with the same. She attempted to distinguish the terrace beneath; its outline was not even there. With a sudden opening thought she returned her eyes upon the range of windows in the castle-wall. A lady in white, with a handkerchief before her face, stood in the very next balcony.

“’Tis the banshee! a spirit, an unquiet ghost has witnessed our ominous woe,” cried Edith fearfully, taking refuge beside her cousin.

“Don’t alarm yourself, dearest!” said Mary, a blush of shame in being one of such a scene giving place to a laugh at her own confusion and Edith’s timidity, “’tis either Frederick dressed up to alarm and interest us, or, what I am more inclined to credit, it is Lady Willoughby, who accidentally stepped from her chamber, just as we were acting romance. How silly such scenes look when so unexpectedly interrupted!”

“It was your brother, Mary! I am sure it was; don’t be angry with me. Oh don’t hate me! I am afraid of him, I dread that man!

something tells me I ought to shun him, and yet—do what I will, he is ever near me; he haunts my dreams by night; all the long day he is seldom out of sight or hearing. 'Tis not like a lion who tears you with his lordly paw; but like a toad that hurts you with its slime. I am wicked, very, very wicked; but the woman's fiend—what you will, rises in me, and tempts me to chastise him publicly. While I had London to countenance me, I bore your brother's faults and falsity. I fear to meet him now—alone to guard myself, I shall do it terribly."

"My cousin, my friend, Edith, my own love—calm yourself, you terrify me; but nevertheless you do not inspire me to hate you; how could I think of such a thing? You are young—much younger in the world perhaps than in age. Frederick may be the first, but he cannot be the last, to flatter and compliment you, and thereby tease and affront your young pride. These are common implements of conversation to thoughtless gallants, who imagine women like flattery; they hardly ever mean what they say."

"Extravagant duplicity! can men have so little respect for themselves? I have read of what you assert in books, and perhaps they are your authorities; but Levison does not talk such offensive trash as your brother. Be candid, Mary! did Levison ever flatter you? and cause you to blush as Mr. Frederick has me?"

"How could he?" returned Mary, "I have not a feature in my face to build so much poetry upon, and poetry, you know, is the exaggerated effusion of the brain—some say of the heart; but the florid architecture must be founded on fact to make it interesting; otherwise it sounds, as it would to me, like ridicule."

"Mary, Mary! you won't answer me fairly; you seek to immure me in a maze of your brother's."

"Never, never, Edith! I would be, I will be, the clue to guide you from his snare."

Edith's reproach sounded so near an allusion to the service Mary's mother attempted to press

friend appearing ungenerous on her part, gave the modest answer Mary gave.

"I see you are getting angry with me; I know I have deserved it; but I did but half what you interpret to your own and my infinite sorrow. Sometimes I let an excess of love fall out; let not this hurt my friend, or I shall be unwillingly and provisionally alone in this wilderness, where thorny thistles grow, far from my home and Nelly!"

"Edith, my more than sister, my friends, my lover, my all on this earth, upbraid me thus? You have a father, I have Nelly too—what have I? Were you to leave me? let us cling to each other."

to papa I never mentioned your brother Frederick. I could not write his name ; I could not say I liked him, and so was silent. The rest of your family I could mention with some interest attached to each. My own Mary I never forgot, nor Levison ; you generally occupy the same page, very near each other."

Mary sighed.

"I hope papa will repay Captain Levison in part for his kindness to me. I am sure he would, did he know all ; but I can never explain Levison's merits without tarnishing the picture, yet rendering it striking by the contrast between the two young men. Really, Mary, your announcement that you accompany me all the whole way back to Malvern is the only thing that makes up for Levison's absence. I feel so helpless, I am very selfish. Is this Lady Willoughby at all like your other visitors, the Misses Macklin ?"

"I don't know her in the least, my dear ; her family and my mother's were old friends, and I

believe she was school companion of Lady Hester's. The Leonard Willoughbys are not the youngest people in the world ; so, I presume, if they don't like you, or me, they will not notice us in any way, pleasing or otherwise ; and we shall be exempted from the slightest care or concern in the party—happier to be alone, satisfied with each other. Come," concluded Mary, " let us good-temperedly prepare for the evening, hoping for the best, and be ready to guard our

conduct with propriety and satisfaction to our own consciences, that when we retire for the night we may have no cause for accusing or excusing ourselves. You and I are in the world, Edith ; we must learn fortitude under trials which, of necessity, must come to us sooner or later."

" Here again you remind me of dear old Nelly, only you speak with less ambiguity and greater decision. Flowers, snow, rain-drops, earth, air, and blue skies, were the characteristic instruments of her pleasure or chastisement ; nature in

tears or smiles shone or sighed at her will, to prove to her child what was natural and true and beautiful, or melancholy and sublime, in surrounding objects, that were designed as much for pleasure, judgment, and profit to man and *me*—creatures greatly blessed and cared for.”

“I know her gentle lessons by heart—many and fine are they; birds with bright wings seem ever hovering near her, and whispering thoughts, tales, and tidings fresh from fairy-land. Your nurse, Edith, would make a prominent feature in a romance of real life; she is so genuine, and yet so enthusiastic and original.”

“She is a daughter of Erin,” exclaimed the enraptured Edith, her cheek glowing with fidelity and love. “A shamrock wild and beautiful, transplanted from her native soil, not indigenous here. Oh, may I never see her droop and languish!” Edith could not say, “die.”

“Yet why not, Edith? her own nursling should still remain to prop the aged head, and guide the faint arm, that once bore her darling

in safety and pride over uneven ground in her careless babyhood, and through trials and temptations in maturer age. Rather desire to live and watch by her growing infirmities, to perfect her lips in smiles, her tongue in blessings on your head !”

“Oh, Mary, I could talk thus for ever ; why must we heed that eating-bell ? Sensuality calls us from sentiment.”

“And a due attention to our wants, in this particular, maintains and conduces to the strength of our bodies, and with them, in happy fellowship, insures the continuance of our souls,” said Mary, laughing.

“You rogue ! again you would circumvent me—take me literally when I dissemble, and when I speak plain, you, forsooth, explain it a riddle in disguise. I see your policy, I know your fell intent, to make me gay when I would be glum—to hide me from my very self.”

Hipps interrupted their conversation, and with



her assistance the cousins' toilette was soon completed.

The gentle Mary in pure white, the fair Edith in ominous black, together threaded the mazes of a passage leading from their apartment, and descended the broad oaken staircase to the drawing-room.

An elderly gentleman, of the middle size, stood with his back towards the fire ; but immediately upon their approach, moved on one side, and bowed low to the young ladies.

"My pretty niece, admiral," said Mr. Jones, taking Edith by the hand, and presenting her to the old man.

"Your most obedient, Miss A—a—."

"Leslie, Sir Leonard."

"George, Captain Leslie's daughter ? severely wounded at Waterloo—receives a pension—lives in our neighbourhood—a soldier and a recluse—lost"—he cast his eye on Edith's dress and checked himself.

"The same, and a rare specimen of beauty and sweetness this filly of his!" added his uncle.

"True, by my senses!" exclaimed the old gentleman; "happy to make your acquaintance, Miss Leslie, very happy!" he added, shaking hands: "I hope your father is well?"

"Quite well, thank you, Sir Leonard," said Edith, whose blushes were playing at hide-and-seek with the lilies on her youthful cheek.

Sir Leonard gallantly offered her a chair, and seated himself accordingly.

"This is my youngest born! Polly Popkins," said her father.

"Miss Polly, I am glad of the introduction," returned Sir Leonard, again rising, and making an obeisance; "this is the only one of your children I have not had the pleasure of knowing before, squire."

"How should you? Why, she is only just come from school and ban——. She, or her education, (it don't matter which) is just finished. A tidy little article is my fan-tail."

"He is just the lad for the lasses—toys with them like a girl with her dolls. Now Fred. (though his mother flatters herself he's a perfect ladies' reticule) to my mind is too much of a *ridicule*, and with his wit (like marbles) hits them over the knuckles too sharp, by all that's tender! for women's silken gloves."

In spite of herself, Edith, who took a peculiar and nameless interest in everything concerning her cousin Frederick, on this occasion could hardly distract her attention from the old admiral who sat near her; his fine weather-beaten countenance, illuminated by the light of the fire into which he gazed with an attentive abstraction. His head was bald, excepting, as it were, a wreath of white hair that curled venerably round the poll, forming an instant and pleasing contrast to the blue dress coat the sailor delighted to wear. His eyes were light, and looked blandly from their setting; his forehead rose high to a benevolent peak. If storms had ever been there, they had long since passed away, leaving it unruffled, except where

age had contributed to relax its texture, which seemed to follow every undulation of the bone; a deep but now serene valley was sheltered by the projecting influence of the frontal sinus.

From his eyebrows hung a few thin hairs, that, similar to his small whiskers, were white as the shirt collar that met them and neckcloth tied beneath. His nose, long, fine and aquiline, bespoke him rather the courtier than the blunt seaman; his mouth closed, or partially open, had a prevailing smile that interested the looker-on; his teeth, unusual with men of his age, were untarnished and regular. A coat with standing collar, and waistcoat cut after the olden style, knee-breeches, black silk stockings, with shoes and buckles of polished steel, completed his person and attire.

Again the door opened, and Lady Hester entered. Upon her arm leaned Lady Willoughby. She seemed in delicate health, and guided her steps to the sofa, upon which she reclined with a well-bred ease. The admiral rose, and after

asking how she did, inclined his head, directing her attention towards Edith.

"My love, you will be gratified by my introducing to you Miss Leslie."

Edith curtsied gracefully, and approached to the extended hand of Lady Willoughby, who earnestly regarding her, whispered, "Are you quite well, dear?"

"Quite well, thank you, madam," murmured Edith in the same low tone. She thought the invalid's nerves required caution in her address. Edith instantly felt so interested in the health of the lady who looked upon her thus kindly.

"That musical voice would rather improve my head than injure its soundness at this moment. You sing, Miss Leslie?"

"I do," said Edith in a louder key, "but very simply; you will overlook my deficiencies, will you not?"

"Yes dear, with all the pleasure in the whole world."

This was the first announcement Edith had made in that house of her vocal powers.

"We are friends already—are we not?"

"You are very kind," replied Edith heartily.

"I have seen you before, my dear."

"When?" exclaimed Edith, looking to see if she could recognise her features.

"You won't remember me. I had on a white veil."

"You were then the banshee! the ghost that frightened us both?"

"I was."

"Oh, thank you for telling me; if it were natural, I attributed that apparition to another, with whom I was, in consequence, unjustly angry."

Attracted by Edith's energy, Mary had heard the latter part of this conversation. She felt a just satisfaction at her suspicions concerning the cause of their fright and sorrow, being confirmed according to her suggestions; and addressed

herself to caressing Lady Hester's Italian greyhound, Sylph.

Her aunt, the admiral, and Mr. Jones de Winter formed a conversational group, which absence of restraint gave Edith greater freedom in her words and thoughts.

"Is not this your cousin?" Without waiting another syllable, Edith brought Mary to Lady Willoughby's side.

"She is my own dear, sweet cousin Mary."

"That I am sure of," said Lady Willoughby, pressing her hand. "You are nice companions for each other. Were you brought up together?"

"No, Lady Willoughby," answered Mary, "we have only lately met."

"Then dear girls, from what I now see of you both, I don't think either will easily relinquish the affection of the other."

"Oh no, never, no!" cried Edith, glowing with love towards her friend.

"You are Irish, I think, my young energetic?"

"I had, and I have, a dear Irish nurse," replied Edith.

"I was sure of it ; and where is this dear Irish nurse, may I ask ?"

"Oh ! said Mary, "old Nelly lives in the prettiest cottage by the wayside that ever gave birth to poetry, in the prettiest county in England, where the myrtle grows wild, and the honeysuckle blossoms all through the year."

"To be sure ! Devonshire, my adopted country also. Miss Leslie is then the daughter of Captain Leslie, Lady Hester's relative, who lives at that romantic spot, Malvern ?"

Lady Willoughby was too delicate to touch any further upon Edith's family, lest she might remind the young girl of her loss. Edith seemed sensible of this, and a shade of sadness was cast over her before joyous features. She looked for her ring—the last light of her love. A faint scream startled the company. "I have lost it ! ah me ! my mother !" Edith concealed her tears in her hand.



"What in the name of fortune is the matter with the child?" cried Lady Hester.

"I fear I have unintentionally wounded feelings," said Lady Willoughby in sorrow.

"No, indeed, dear Lady Willoughby, you have not done so; a ring—I have lost a ring!"

"Your ring, my girl; if that is all, cheer up. Frederick has the trinket, and I know was writing sonnets upon it this afternoon. 'Tis safe in his keeping, rely upon my word, and his gallantry.

Edith dried her tears; but the smile of partial satisfaction sat unquietly upon her countenance, and with every opening of the door her eyes turned anxiously.

"The tints of Erin's flowers are not deeper than the green sea that girdles her. The minds of her children take their colour from the variety and beauty of the one, and are as lightly and sensibly agitated as the bosom of the ocean that is cradled on," remarked Lady Willoughby.

"Not so light either, Lady Willoughby," said Mary whispering near; "her mother's gift Edith mourns."

“Ah, indeed! poor dear, had I known that!”

Frederick slid into the room with his eyes intent upon the ceiling, affecting to believe admiration must be concentrated upon him, which prevented his lowering his eyes, lest he should fascinate the assembly with their intensity. He smoothed his chin with his right hand, by this manœuvre displaying a very brilliant ring that garnished his little finger. Edith was mute; she saw the ring, and was confounded at his presuming thus to exhibit her treasure. “Profanation!” she thought within herself.

At length the heir of Gwyn Dinas deigned to look around him, and honoured Lady Willoughby with his notice.

“Madam, I dare to hope your fatigues during your long trajet have not sealed your eyes to the beauties by which we are surrounded?” waving his hand towards the company, and holding both up, in posture recommending particular attention to himself. Lady Willoughby nodded her head

to the one, but remained silent and inattentive to his allusions concerning himself.

"My angel-cousin!" exclaimed Frederick, suddenly bringing down his eyes to Edith's face, "I had overlooked you; a creature so fair, and yet overlooked by me! Shame to my eye for the beautiful! you won't forgive me, will you, lovely Edith?" Observing her countenance relax nothing of its severity, "by that pretty patte!" sitting close beside her, his breath moistened her cheek—he attempted a second time to possess himself of her hand.

Edith started from her trance and position, and the next moment stood above him, her hand hid behind her waist.

"You will greatly oblige me, Mr. Frederick de Winter, by surrendering that ring."

Her tone was commanding, and her slight form, tall and erect, gave dignity to her words. There was a general pause.

"A very pretty object truly!" hisped Frederick,

leaning his cheek on his hand, the more conveniently and leisurely to survey his victim. "Vesuvius in a pet is nothing to it. A small waist, a light foot, a long neck, my gawwle rampant I greet thee graceful."

"Oh, Frederick, you know not what you do ; give Edith that ring—it is her m— m—"

"My mother's !" said Edith firmly.

"Shame, sir, shame !" said the Admiral and Mr. Jones, in a breath.

Lady Willoughby rose, and approaching Frederick before he was aware, had spoiled his finger of its ornament. He looked vexed and foolish.

"Come hither, Edith Leslie ?" said Lady Willoughby, "my poor dear ! what is this ?" taking the finger Edith gave.

"The ring will heal it," said Edith gently ; "I gained the scar when I lost the ring."

"How rough, how coarse !" her friend repeated indignantly, "must have been the hand that inflicted the wound !" frowning meaningly upon Frederick.

"That ring requires a guard," said Lady Willoughby, placing a magnificent emerald hoop above the diamond.

"Oh, Lady Willoughby!"

"Keep it, and may heaven bless you."

"And repay the orphan's friend," said Edith, with a voice that thrilled to the soul.

The old admiral, laughing with delight, clapped his hands, and cheered her; whilst Mr. Jones de Winter drummed upon the table so energetically as to upset a pile of drawing-room books, that fell promiscuously upon the floor, scattering their fragments to the furthest corners of the room.

Lady Hester rushed to the rescue of a choice album which she feared had suffered in the mêlée, and finding its leaves displayed in all quarters, vented her anger for this and other grievances upon her usual chopping-block—the broad, good-natured head of her lord miscalled.

"Ah, pity me, ye pitiful!" she exclaimed, attempting to attract attention to herself from Frederick. "Here is Lord Mellowbank's group

of violets under the music-stand and Sir Archibald Sliver's inimitable caricatures amusing the French kitten. Where is Ude's receipt that he wrote for me with a silver skewer. Immortal Ude! king of cooks! a perfect receipt for dressing onions to savour like truffles. I have lost ye, cabalistic words of the gastronomic necromancer! Who'll find them shall have my deserved thanks. Hoky Poky's autograph is also missing! I had it from his black majesty's own hand. An original and very valuable portrait of a great sea-serpent, sketched on the spot—on the ocean, in detached pieces by an illustrious American, who saw each part rise as the other disappeared; among which the head and tail bear a striking resemblance to each other. Admiral! did you ever meet with a great sea-serpent?"

"Yes, madam, she had fascinated so many of our craft with her false colours, that I kept a sharp look-out for her—descried her from the mast-head; we neared, and just as she was getting up her witchery, we poured a broadside into

her. She went down instantly, and never offered to show her head to mortal crew again. We entered her in the log-book, her name and nature, &c. &c. It was off the Ladrões, at about 14° E. Lon. 20° N. Lat. This was the first and last serpent I met on the same coast. She was much dreaded on those seas; dire tales are told of her, and seamen said that the ocean in her wake became red like gore."

"This is a very extraordinary and well attested zoological fact," said Miss Macklin, who took advantage of the first opportunity congenial to her taste, of apprizing the company of her presence. "What a dreadful creature it must have been!"

"She was an American," said the admiral.

"I am aware! the latitude and longitude you found her in probably inclined you to this conceit. Is the reptile oviparous like all those embraced in our erpethology?"

"Miss Macklin, I don't quite understand you!

You will excuse me," said the admiral, bowing courteously.

"Certainly, Sir Leonard; oviparous I desire to be understood—produced from eggs, in like manner as birds, &c. &c. as including under one head, or nominating a series of reptiles of the shark tribe; in a similar manner as the terms geology, ichthyology, conchology, morphology, zoology, botany, &c., indicate the classification or general arrangements of organic bodies in the animal and vegetable kingdoms; as numismathology unambiguously expresses another science of material importance and fruitful interest to the world at large."

"I am still labouring under a misconception of the subject you desire me to join in. Will you have the goodness to elucidate it more clearly to the understanding of an old man?" said the admiral modestly.

"My love!" suggested Lady Willoughby from the sofa, "of what I can gather from the remnants



of your conversation, I ween, you have been giving an account of the destruction of the *Arcturion*, a privateer, the great "Sea Serpent;" and Macklin has mistaken your narrative for an assertion of the existence of a scarcely more fabulous monster."

"It is so," returned Lady Hester, with a smile at her own credulity; "I left my bits and pieces yonder at the mercy of Sylph and Mine. I might listen to this wonderful tale with undivided attention!"

"How could I be so obtuse?" said Macklin pettishly, seating herself with a jerk and settling decidedly in the centre of her chair.

"So it isn't a real sea serpent after all, is it, admiral? And was it for this we were introduced upon the question of improving our Welsh by crosses with the Scotch cattle? The *Shire's*, for instance, is a fine breed, looks well in the park, tells well in the dairy, fats well in the stall, and more than all, eats well on the

Streaky beef, like streaky bacon, is the prime sort."

"A truce Mr. Jones, I pray, to your butcher and gourmand speculations!"

"My dear Lady Hester! you don't know what a beautiful creature the Ayrshire cow is, and how well she would look in your park, Lady Hester: her straight back, fine withers, and mottled flanks dashed all over, as it were, and specked down the legs like a liver and white spaniel—not a poor sickly red, but a dark, deep stain; as sleek as a race-horse into the bargain, and shining as no Macassar oil could make her. I think of importing to my own estate a herd of them. Look sharp! or you shan't have one within sight of your windows to feast your eyes upon! There is a matter of some difference between these favourites, and your little black Glamorganshire cattle, with their curly, woolly, frightened jackets, for all the world like chimney sweeps; their hair turned the wrong way after sliding down backwards from the dark nooks of

their calling. The cow is said to give eighteen quarts of milk daily ; so think what fifty of this kine in opposition to the Welch cattle must yield ! The proceeds of the dairy would amount to something not inconsiderable, and you would be very glad after a bit to swell your pin-money by the change."

"Upon these conditions I yield readily to your terms ; but don't plague me too much with a catalogue of the beauties of Smithfield, or I shall be inclined to revolt, and put in my veto against everything bordering on the subject."

"Mr. Jones de Winter," inquired Miss Macklin, "probably you can explain to me, the reason of the Welch cattle being, generally speaking, so rough, and uncouth, and small, in comparison with those of other kinds. Probably the length of their fur is as a security from the cold, which is severe among our hills. Then why are not the Ayrshire rough and coarse ?

"You see it strikes me, miss, that in the one instance the long coat is a preservative from the

weather—in the other, that a certain oil is poured upon the skin that answers the same purpose, and has a more pleasing effect.”

“Very philosophically accounted for,” said Miss Macklin approvingly; “the oil doubtless exudes from the pores of the skin.”

“But the great reason,” continued Mr. de Winter, “that our indigenous cattle are of a worse figure, coarser meat, and smaller description than other breeds, I account for in this way. We Welch farmers are acknowledged to be as bull-headed as our oxen—by no means practical; we are averse from adopting other men’s measures, be they never so superior to our own. This infatuation pervades every class in the community; so our beasts have dwindled from want of care and judicious crosses; they have returned to what they were in a wild state, all over England, where the cattle are cultivated as much as the land; there is not a country in the world that presents a finer assemblage of this particular stock, as well as sheep and the lesser

indispensables of the table. The very pigs of this country partake of the general retrograde movement. I defy you to tell them from sheep in a field. Why they carry as many bristles as a wild boar. Ha! ha! ha! this reminds me of Jonathan Baynton; he could talk of nothing but the Tudor style as the best taste in which modern habitations should be built. I told him I would show him mine, which were divided into sleeping apartments, and banqueting rooms. He asked me concerning the first story. I laughed and told him he should design that, if he could make easy the ascent, as I did not relish fat being lost by fatigue to the lodgers. I took him to the farm-yard, and showed him my range of piggeries; he looked as glum as a dog with a mallet in his head, and then I learnt it was *style* not *sty*, he meant. To put him in good humour again, I vowed I'd build Tudor sties in future and have Baynton for my architect."

A general hum of conversation drowned all other sounds. Edith, flushed with excitement

sat, silent and happy, near her newly acquired friend, thinking of subjects wholly foreign to the present events, yet springing from them. The reverend Hugh Bourne came before her, a pleasing, cheering, peace-making object. She saw Nelly train a lovely moss-rose tree, which the old lady had named her 'colleen dhas,' in memory of her darling, who had presented the same on her birth-day to this dear nurse. She put tea-leaves round the root—those leaves she had saved from the tea of her own drinking; and while she did so, she chanted a favourite hymn that seemed to swell the air around her, and Edith struck her foot to its time. Suddenly she remembered the dark-eyed, the beautiful stranger she had left at Nelly's home, and wondered what had become of her and that sweetest child—the fair-haired cherub she had nursed, she had caressed, and so unintentionally caused to cry.

Her papa seemed to have forgotten the circumstance, or dismissed it intentionally from his letters. Doubtless he had some good reason; who could think better than her own beloved

parent? She pressed a kiss in deep fervent thought upon his hallowed cheek; she smoothed his pillow, and left him to repose. Owence, the cowherd, saluted her as she gazed vacantly from the window, and a shaggy sheep-dog, lately grown from a puppy, barked a shrill recognition to the lady his master taught him to praise. Bully came to the end of his perch, and putting his little blunt bill through the wires of his cage, offered a kiss to his mistress. She patted Meteor, who rejoiced like a lover at her return; she saw old Margery Jones emerge from her cabin-door, and look upon the common (shading her eyes with her hand) to see if her mistress approached.

Her household gods she worshipped. Edith cherished these thoughts, and loved, longed and burned with a passionate ardour to behold them once again. She caught at the images fancy had presented, and held them very close.

"Miss Leslie, Edith, my cousin! You will forgive my indiscretion just now?" said a supplicating voice near her.

Edith turned. Frederick, looking sorrowful, bowed before her.

"Mr. Frederick," said the young girl feelingly, "would that we never, never, had cause for bitterness! You have harassed me frequently, and this night wounded me deeply. A timely balm has been applied by a compassionate stranger. I forgive you. Change your conduct and I may even respect you."

"Take my arm to the *salle à manger*, and so confirm your pardon."

Edith hesitated.

"Excuse me, sir, you are only half white-washed," interrupted Lady Willoughby. "I claim a guardian's influence over the unprotected. Edith, love, take my other arm—Mr. de Winter leads me in to dinner."

"I declare there are more ladies than gentlemen," said Miss Dorothea Macklin, peering out for a beau. "I really must take your fin, my Emma," whispered the elderly lady, hinting that if it were not a matter of physical impossi-



bility (as in the present instance), her superiority would certainly be recognised by some gallant young man whose taste was judicious, and she should have been singled from the group of maidens, and made the subject of his attentions !

Miss Macklin, in compulsory silence, walked in lonesome majesty, steadfastly eyeing Mary, who preceded her, and tolerated the support of the good-natured Jack Barrett, who vouched for the truth of no fewer than three extraordinary fables during the approach to the eating-room. The rear was closed by Frederick, who followed sulkily far behind.

CHAPTER V.

I know not whether love can fling  
A deeper witchery from his wing  
Than falls, sweet power of song, from thine.  
Yet, ah! the wreath that binds thy shrine,  
Though seemingly all bloom and light,  
Hides thorn and canker, worm and blight.

L. E. L.

Edith, finding a protector and influential friend in the Lady Willoughby, paid little heed to Frederick's future compliments ; like leaves they fell and withered round her.

Her selfish lover arrogated to himself a rich harvest of young sweets sacrificed to his avarice, and grew bolder with the daring hope, whilst his

endeavours to ingratiate himself with Edith seemed successful. Lady Hester again looked forward to the desirable prospect of a union between the cousins; and consummated in some conventional compact the consanguinity of substance, and incongruity of hearts.

Edith wanted not a bean so long as the old admiral remained at Gwyn Dinas. There was something approaching to tenderness in his manner towards her, which caused the young girl to look upon him with a revering and relying interest, that established her still more in his favour, mystically uniting both. Often excited by some remark in the course of conversation, the aged seaman spoke of little children with tears in his eyes, and the Lady Willoughby sighed. They seemed to lament over a lost cherub, that had been to both most dear.

Edith thought so, and sympathized in their sorrow with an unaffected feeling of distress.

Edith and Mary talked of these new-found friends, rejoicing together over each other's

admirable fortune in acquiring the esteem of such amiable individuals.

Edith's dread of her aunt, and restraint in her presence, gradually wore away, as that lady treated her with kindness, amounting to favouritism, so great and evident was her indulgence of her niece. Whatever Edith said was listened to—whatever Edith wished for was immediately procured; and in every way she was considered before another in the juvenile circle. Although there were times when this preference caused Edith deep concern and evident embarrassment, her innate modesty shrinking from observation.

Imperceptibly won, she opened more and more of the charms of her disposition and nicely cultivated talents. Frederick became sincere in his affection, and consequently less burdensome in his attentions, and more judicious in his compliments.

At first he had endeavoured to act a part he did not feel; lately he had learnt to respect his object; and love grew out of this sentiment. Emma alone was rigid in her hate; she seldom

conversed with Edith, and that little, never good humour, or upon themes of pleasant. She glided in and out of the room Edith occupied with a sideling suspicious eye cast upon her cousin. Edith, like the rose, unfolded her beauties to the genial sun of kindness, and as sensitive, shrank from the blight of envy, and shunned this girl.

Mary alone did not enjoy her cousin's happiness; she grew more reserved than was her wont, she became absent and distracted in her domestic intercourse with her family; the only subject which seemed to interest her was Malvern, and her restless anxiety to remove there displayed itself in her conversations with Edith, who also longed to depart home, but was delicate of offending her aunt by departing before the expiration of the period her papa desired she should remain.

A grand ball was announced to take place at Carnaervon. Although the distance was considerable, most of the party determined upon repairing thither. All was bustle and preparation.

at Gwyn Dinas ; Edith amused herself inspecting the costumes, and listening to the accounts of the inundation of company expected, as detailed by the daily visitors at the castle. Hitherto she had not been addressed upon the subject, as all seemed agreed she would make one of the party.

After breakfast one morning, as the family sat chatting upon desultory topics, the well-canvassed ball was again brought into the first rank of debates, by the announcement that Madame Souvenir, from Cheltenham, had just arrived, to take orders (*en passant*) in her way to Lord Daubeny's where she had been summoned to display her taste in the decoration of the five honourable Misses Daubeny, none of whom had gone off, though they had all gone out.

"Edith, love ! come with me to the modiste ; I wish her to execute her first and best upon you ; my girls will follow."

Edith hung back ; she coloured and was silent ; she wished to speak, and could not.

"Come, dearest! don't be bashful, I'll champion you."

"When unadorned, adorned the most," ~~claimed~~ Frederick with admiration.

"I do not think so, Lady Hester," said ~~Edith~~, fearing her aunt might attribute this compliment of Frederick's to her assent. "I desire, my dear aunt, you will be so very good as to permit me ~~to~~ remain at home."

"Why child," said Lady Hester reproachfully, "I set my heart upon presenting you to our county friends and neighbours, as my very ~~fair~~ and favourite niece—my third daughter, if you will."

Frederick looked down.

"Thank you, Lady Hester, for your partiality and tenderness towards me, but believe, it will be more sincerely appreciated by your affectionate niece, if you allow her to remain with your invaluable friend, Lady Willoughby, to minister to her comfort."

All turned imploringly towards Lady Willoughby.

"Oh, dear child, don't think of me, I shall retire to rest early, and need not this sacrifice of your young pleasure to my sickness."

The admiral appeared proudly gratified, and pressing Edith's hand: "Miss Leslie, I hold you engaged to me for a country dance. I have not tripped the 'light fantastic toe' these two-and-thirty years, and intend coming out under your auspices, my fair mistress! You mustn't deprive me of your hand by coquetting with wifery! Don't make an old man jealous; 'tis a terrible sight to see!"

"Dear admiral, dear Lady Willoughby, my aunt, hear me!" said Edith, struggling with emotion. "I may not change this grave costume upon an event of festivity. 'Tis sacred to one I cannot forget suddenly, or whose memory I could fold up as I would this garment."

"Enough, child," said Lady Hester, patting her on the neck, "you shall always have your way in this house."

The old admiral retired to his room, upon the



plea of having forgotten something (probably a pocket-handkerchief). Approving silence pervaded the remainder of the party.

"Come girls," continued Lady Hester, with a daughter on either arm, she left the breakfast party.

"What luck and what folly," she added "within an hour has happened to me! Folly bewitched me to introduce the girl, and this fortunate decision of la belle's, (which, by the way is affectation, to say the least of it, her mother being dead above a twelvemonth) has prevented my running the risk of her loss to us all; as had I shown the pretty creature, twenty beaux might have started up, and perhaps taken her heart by storm from its rightful lord, my own son. We must go and see whether ribbon bows or loops will snare the gay birds we desire. Never mind those that are trapped; we can return to them if others suit us not better, or should false knights prove."

This she said, to supply Emma with an excuse for selecting another, in the absence of her beau.

"A rare display, my girls, at the ensuing ball of fine plumage ; discerning, I'll teach ye to fly at the pocket-merits, and shy the bombast of pride and little fortune. Better, believe me, to ride in a carriage with your lord, (or without him, if you list), leaving your nursery in charge of a long list of bonnes, than to be kept at home by half-a-dozen pair of clogs, to act head-nurse, and to waste your life in comparative servitude."

"So the master-spirit limes his twigs," said Frederick, catching his mother by the sleeve ; "wait a moment, ma mere, before the trammel-woman throws her enchantments over your decoy-birds. Don't count upon me for the ball. I think I'll stay behind."

"Very well, dear ; then I shan't order the poplin waistcoat. Thank you for this thoughtfulness," said Lady Hester, affecting to believe it

was such a trifle Frederick considered when he addressed her.

Frederick purposely let fall in Edith's presence that the ball had no charms for him. She thought him whimsical, and included this freak in the list of oddities he was remarkable for.

The evening arrived—all congregated in the drawing-room to inspect each other, and be inspected—to approve and mutually edify.

Miss Dorothea Macklin had added to her turban a stout yellow feather, that, situated immediately in front, stuck bolt upright, like an infantry soldier's cap-plume. She had otherwise metamorphosed her head-gear, by substituting for the embroidered ends (which had grown dirty) a voluminous tissue of silver brocade, that fell on each side, and served at once for scarf and lap-pets; a short scanty dress of yellow silk settled round her meagre little figure in ungraceful wrinkles, as its dimensions would not admit of folds; rosettes of crimson gauze festooned the skirt, that was looped at one side à la Diane, with

a gaudy look, such as never grew in a kitchen garden with the vegetable tribe, but seemed to have been trained in bowers with other and fragrant herbage associates. This tuck discovered a striped petticoat of doubtful texture, rather resembling one of her favourite lindsey, and was intended to add, not only originality, but indispensable heat to the minute detail of her perishable substances.

Miss Macklin belonged to the Amazonian school; a white blond scarf crossed one bosom in this style, and fell, in an ample train from beneath her arms. She wore her own wig, disposed in graceful tresses, surmounted by a light and fairy-like toque, that seemed framed from a bee's wing and spangled with honey-drops, the last mode from Paris, and "designed especially for very young married women," as Mad. Souvenir declared; however Miss Macklin tried it upon Edith, and found the whole thing so charming, that it would certainly become her. Her dress was black velvet, spoiled with flounces of white

lace. Whether from a want of the roundness of youth, or from a disdain of all mechanical means of filling out, these ladies appeared yet further remarkable and original, from the slenderness, the want of expression, or exaggeration, of their natural proportions.

Lady Hester and her two daughters were in the most finished chaste style of modern fashion. Mary wore a splendid diamond sash, at which all exclaimed upon her entrance. Well it became that pale brow; but to-night Mary's countenance betrayed a melancholy that made the deepest impression upon her friend and cousin Edith. Mary looked lovely, was about to enjoy herself, yet why that gloom? that rayless eye? that trembling lip, when Edith kissed her?

To use her own words, Lady Hester "rejoiced at the figures the Miss Macklins had made themselves;" as these remarkable women must attract attention, and her pride presumed upon her increased importance, when the mighty whisper of, "Don't you know them? the wealthy and proud

Misses Macklin, who live at that splendid place the Pentré—now staying with Lady Jaques Jones de Winter, and arrived in her train; they are sponsors to my lady's two daughters, who, they say, will come well off in their wills."

Contrary to his free declaration, Frederick was among the gentlemen. He professed anxiety to be off, and his dress appeared to have cost him little attention. Not so Mr. Jones de Winter, who, in a gay waistcoat, the hue of a robin's red-breast, looking as good-tempered as he did satisfied with himself and all around him, hopped from side to side, displaying the agility which the gout had yet left to his legs.

With other carriages came Jack Barrett's by promise, to fill the escort, his ample yet active proportions nothing concealed by his breeches and white silk stockings, undulating waistcoat, with posies strewed abundantly over it, and tight neckcloth, girthing his short thick throat.

Lady Hester greeted the young squire very kindly, for he was lord of a fair domain, and had

a goodly rent-roll; the elderly ladies shrank yet more at his presence, and the younger ones avoided him. His entrance to the room was unsteady, notwithstanding he asked for a glass of brandy, as it was a black frost; and recommended even the ladies to fortify themselves with the same beverage ere they dared the cold. John Barrett (usually termed Jack) had been of a handsome countenance; but it was now blasted, and inclined to an unbecoming degree of ruddiness. A good family, &c., recommended him especially to the notice of chaperones—amongst whom Lady Hester always contrived to have the first quills from the goose; although her daughters did not, in consequence, subscribe themselves with the name of the bird. Indeed, but one ~~has~~ been, as yet, introduced. This night she proposed bringing out Mary, as a beau already appeared in relief for Emma.

One by one the carriages drove off, the doors were closed, and Edith sat beside Lady Willoughby. She read for the invalid, they conversed

together, and became more and more interested in each other.

After supper Lady Willoughby begged Edith, as a very great favour, to sing a few of her Irish melodies, to harmonize the evening.

“But how shall I without my harp?”

“There is Lady Hester’s in the corner.”

“Do you think I may use it?”

“Certainly, love! I shall make your peace with your aunt.”

Edith arranged the instrument, drew up a few of the strings with the hand and ear of a consummate musician, tried the tone, and again tuned more critically.

Lady Willoughby was herself a superior performer upon other instruments, and regarded the young girl’s method with attention. She feared to betray a knowledge of music more than an occasional exclamation that she was very foud of it, lest Edith’s timidity should overcome her desire to oblige. Edith seated herself—her gloves and handkerchief strewed the floor—her



from the harp—it confessed its uterine  
second power to that inspired voice  
ing, wild, crying, invoking and her  
varied strains that saddened, subdued  
and might to the notes that in star  
rang. Lady Willoughby raised her  
sofa—the door gently opened. Lady  
rapt attention was only slightly  
she lifted her hand in motion to ex  
ness; her pulses tingled with the  
made all things tremble; a figure le  
the shade appeared at the threshold  
seemed to have paused or left it alto  
air blew cold upon Edith's arms as  
shuddered, and the convulsion came  
to fall; her voice was suspended; i

would have sunk, but a gentleman received her in his arms.

"Edith ! lovely, loveliest, dearest, most adorable ! it is Frederick—your own cousin—your worshipper !"

"Frederick !" she half screamed, and disengaged herself, "you frighten me ; I thought I saw your ghost !"

She stood trembling beside Lady Willoughby, who was nearly as terrified as her young friend. "We thought you were at the ball ! how comes it you are covered with mud ?" said Lady Willoughby, scanning the young man.

"The riddle this—the result the same," he exclaimed, bending on one knee, and presenting a rare spar to Edith.

"Exquisite ! beyond everything lovely ; is this the rock-crystal ? (A) How could you have remembered it ? Why it is a full clear month since I desired to have some."

"Since that day until this the mines have been closed ; I rode ten miles to —, entered

the caves of the earth, and proceeded six miles under ground, guided by a candle in a socket of clay, in my own hand: as it burnt down, I squeezed up the buried stalk, that lit, and flickered, and flared as if it delighted in nothing better than puzzling the shadows in the dreary voids we passed. I reached the place where I was told these were found—discovered the diamond vein—and assisted in tearing this from the riven rock—then ascended the shaft to regions of upper air, where I sat breathing till I had inhaled a stock sufficient to carry me home—I crept to the door—I stood half an hour in attitude of adoration—I heard—but I will not repeat what I never conceived before in my most romantic dreams. Such sentiment! such pathos Oh, I dare not proceed!”

“Mr. Frederick! for once in your life you do not exaggerate,” said Lady Willoughby; “we both have had a treat to-night, we neither of us can ever forget. Why, my sweetest Edith, you are more than all I had expected!”

"Thank you, Lady Willoughby, your partiality is very complimentary. This beautiful spar shall indeed be treasured by me. But why remain to catch cold in those damp things? I pray of you, my cousin Frederick, to be careful of your health, or you do away with the value of this present, by the anxiety you will cost me should it suffer."

"Induced by concern from such a quarter, I think I must take care of myself; if you, ladies, will condescend to receive me when I am more fit to appear in your presence."

"We will," said Lady Willoughby and Edith, in a voice.

When Frederick returned, he begged of Edith again to strike those numbers that overcame him.

"Not now," said Edith, "nor ever again, shall I summon courage to pipe after such a startling scene as it has occasioned me."

When the hour arrived for repose, Frederick lighted Lady Willoughby's chamber candle, and

held it till she was ready to depart; then dallied with Edith's, careful to let time escape. First, it would not light—secondly, the snuffers fell upon the floor, and occupied some moments to recover—then the extinguisher rolled under the table, and the kitten, in a playful mood, confused the finder with the chase she gave it. All would not do; Lady Willoughby persisted in waiting for her young friend.

Frederick had something to say; but Lady Willoughby's eye and stately form turned every way, to his dismay and utter confusion. Desperate, he gave the light in uncouth haste, with blundering apology for having detained Edith so long; the draught at the door caught the flame and extinguished it. Edith waited patiently, again received it, and said: "Good night; I hope you may not take cold; remember, I'll never forgive you if you do."

Frederick respectfully kissed her hand. That kind farewell made a serious impression upon her cousin's mind; he dared to hope he held a promi-

nent place in her regard ; nay, he was satisfied of this. A coup-de-maitre he felt he had effected to-night, and retired to rest pleased with his achievement.

Edith reflected when she laid her head upon the pillow, "How could I have ever hated that young man ? I have been a rash, foolish girl ; yet he gave me serious cause ; were those days to return again I should act the same. I was not wrong only, he has improved. Lady Willoughby's manner to me has done this. Oh, how much I have to thank that dear, kind, sweet lady for. Since her arrival at this house, I have been almost happy. Frederick has become quite like what, I suppose, a brother must be. How good of him to take such infinite trouble to procure this spar for me. I fear I have not thanked him enough ; so this was what made him forego the ball. I attributed it to a pique of wilfulness—some giddy appointment he had elsewhere with one of his bachelor friends."

Mary—her own Mary ! Edith pondered and

tried to guess what clouded her cousin's brow; she wondered why Mary had not shown her the splendid ornament she wore in her hair. Mary, who had made a point of displaying the whole of her wardrobe, a few trinkets to Edith, unsolicited and undesired. She never could have forgotten such a gem as decked her cousin. She certainly had not seen it before this night. Why should she conceal the jewel? "Poor Mary! something weighed heavy at her heart; would I had known it and kissed away the grief!"

Edith determined to remain awake until her cousin should come home. She tried, but sleep overtook her watching eyelids. She slept and woke, and slept again; the strong desire she felt to see her cousin the instant she should return pervading, vexed her dreams, and destroyed her repose. She saw Mary put on the deep mourning she had just left off, and beheld Emma, in satanic glee, leading a dance of grave-digger round her friend. Edith groaned and awoke to

confess the delusion, and fall asleep upon her dissipated fears.

Another time she disturbed herself endeavouring to greet her cousin, whom she imagined near her. The dubious light of early day struggled through the chinks in the shutter, as the noise of carriages now really woke the young girl. "They have arrived, at last she comes !" Rapid feet beat the staircase, and Mary abruptly opening the door, closed it with a bolt behind her ; she raised her arm, unbound the sevigne, and concealed it in its former casket.

"Once more I feel my pulse strike its right numbers. Thank heaven ! I am alone again," exclaimed Mary, throwing herself in an arm-chair. "Unhappy, unfortunate girl ! what will become of me ?"

"Mary ! perhaps I may not hear you ! I am awake you know," said Edith timidly.

"And why not ? my cousin, my only friend !" said Mary, throwing herself upon the bed. "I would not hide a sigh or a smile from you.



Haste to listen, that I may unbosom all to thee."

"First tell me, my friend, from whence arose the gloom that settled round your brow when, dressed, you said, 'good bye' to me?"

"Oh that! only that! don't ask me the cause. 'Twere not good for you to learn. Have mercy on me, Edith, or my temples will burst, betray, and destroy me. When the heart is faintest, the head revolts against the body, aching horribly," said Mary, clasping her head in her hands. "All, all the frame is weak—all the life is gone!"

Mary had fainted—she lay motionless on her couch. Edith sprang from it—hesitated whether she should ring the bell; perhaps Mary might not like another to witness her distress. She threw open the shutters, and raised the window. The keen air played with her night-dress—her soul kept her warm—she felt not a chill. Edith bathed her cousin's temples in cold water, and loosed her dress, opening her bosom to the

reviving element that blew around her. She shortly recovered.

"We are alone, are we not?"

"Yes, love, calm yourself; the fatigues of to-night have been too much for you."

"Oh, no," said Mary, "not so; other, heavier, certain ill hangs over me. Hear it, and pity me. You cannot do more—I shall live to thank you for so much. Mr. Barrett has proposed for me this fatal night; he is said to be an excellent match. I must break my own, or my mother's heart. Duty! how hard art thou! I never thought thee hard till now. Yes—once! how I forget! A false memory—a poor weak brain—a wretched individual! Don't look so frightened, my love! I shall not faint again."

"Come and take a little rest, my own Mary!"

"Sleep! I'll sleep perchance never till the dark night of my life shall be o'er."

"Hush, hush, hush!" whispered Edith, raising her finger—"would you tempt the blow? See an almighty arm in vengeful justice lifted up.

EDITH LESLIE.

...in my humility; you shall  
...may be redress."

...to her knees—he  
...poured out their  
...blood that swelled  
...and Edith

...suggests a vi  
...her sister;  
...So  
...Bar  
...Lady  
...and do  
...bruis  
...selfish me  
...the dearest, the tender  
...is broken; my parent  
...Mary; I see her after  
...when I am happy.  
I dare not  
ill

her own be raised against me? My blessed mother!"

The deep tone of emotion yet firmness with which Edith said this struck Mary sensibly. She wondered at the strength of mind, piety, and address, affliction had added to the young creature's many graces. She shook her head when Edith concluded.

"You know not Lady Hester; she is a singular person—a peculiar mother. I cannot, dare not, will not marry this man; 'tis sinful, the thought. I could not respect, I could never kneel and solemnly swear to love him. My heavenly Father first—my mother second. My resolution is taken. In the strength of my own weakness, my reliance upon Him, I own consolation—I have justification."

Mary sat down, and penned the following letter:—

"Sir,

"You have honoured me with your partiality. I am sensible of this, and render you all I can—

my thankful acknowledgments. Ask me never for more, and believe you have my concern with the rest of the human race, for the welfare of your soul and body, at a respectful, regardful distance. I pray you to conceal that you have ever avowed a preference for one who is entirely unworthy of you—for, without reciprocal affection, as it is felt and uttered, you should not solicit woman. I cannot love, and therefore could never honour you, as my duty tells me I ought to reverence my husband. Farewell. I desire to remain,

MARY DE WINTER."

The question now was, how should this letter be conveyed to Bettws Court. Mary had never done anything clandestine before. She reflected, could this act be so called? Impossible. It concerned herself especially, and ought to have her own decision. She arranged it was to be placed last among other letters in the bag, that from the post Mr. Barrett might receive it. How should she ever meet her brother's friend? with

what face should she check his explanations and advances? Mary leaned her head on both hands, and engaged herself in harrowing reflections and wearing meditations, which Edith did not attempt to disturb. Early Edith dressed herself, and with Mary's letter in her bosom descended alone to the breakfast-room.

The time arrived for the post-boy to depart. No letters had been left out for him, and he mounted a weird donkey, and proceeded on his way. Edith watched him from the open window, alone and intent upon his journey. Like a deer, she sprang from the terrace, bounded over the lawn, and darted beneath the Scotch firs, that just concealed her object. She had no key—she knew not where to find it. One moment she hesitated—next pressed the letter through a worn part in the bag. The boy gazed at her with astonishment, at the extremity she was compelled to adopt, but thanked Miss with all his tongue when she put a silver shilling in his palm; however, he noted when it was taken from the bag at the post-

office, that young Miss on a visit had put in a letter to Squire Barrett, for the writing told him so; and he had learned both to write and read at the parish school."

It was very late before the family assembled at breakfast. Mary's desire to keep her chamber was looked upon as a rational indulgence after so much fatigue. Mr. Jones gave positive orders that none of the domestics should disturb the dear child, unless at her own request and desire to eat—an event she would announce by ringing the bell, to which they were as strictly to attend as to his other commands.

The morning's letters were brought in. Jack asked, "Is there one for me?" Some were gratified by receiving. Of those who were neglected, all, as usual, expressed themselves disappointed. Edith silently watched Lady Hester's hand, who, sorting the packets, declared their owners in virtue of her office. All eyes dwelt upon her. Lady Hester looked sly. All eyes were turned

upon Edith, who was wont to employ an interjection of joy at the receipt of one from home.

"That is papa's, the under one of all," she said deliberately.

"How can you see at such a distance, child?"

"I know his writing—I know his folding."

"And I his seal—Malvern in full; here my girl!"

It was passed quickly to its owner. She was about to open it.

"Hallo! how is this?" exclaimed Lady Hester, "a letter for Mr. Barrett put accidentally in our bag."

Edith trembled violently.

"I should know this hand-writing! Whose can it be? a lady's that I have seen before—a love-letter! no, it is an invitation—too short for a love-letter, as I see by the impress on the paper."

She turned it, first one side, then the other, now examined the seal, and again the address.

Edith tore open her father's letter, and held it



before her without seeing a single word. Her confusion and suffering on Mary's account were intense. "This," thought she, "is a judgment upon both of us for acting an underhand part."

Thus she was beginning to despair, when Lady Hester said, "Jones, ring the bell."

Her husband obeyed, and the servant entered.

"Take this to the post-boy directly, and desire him to ride off with it to Bettws, without losing another moment. Give him a pony; he'll never reach the house with that little staggering donkey."

Edith was relieved; the mistake that had returned it with the other letters seemed intended to make its present appearance at Bettws more decisive. She gloried in the suggestion, and left the room to read her papa's letter. She could not enjoy it except in private.

Edith soon returned to the breakfast room with a strange mixture of anxiety, pleasure, and pain depicted in her countenance.

"My dear aunt, my papa desires I should return home instantly."

'Twas like a shock to the whole party. Those who had been reading laid aside their letters and papers to understand Edith's announcement more fully.

"Impossible, my dear! you have misunderstood papa. May I see this letter?" Edith, with some reluctance, placed it in her hand. It ran as follows:—

"My own dear child, my only one, my precious Edith! come back to me. I am well in body (thanks to the goodness of providence), but I cannot hold up in spirits much longer without you. My firmness gives way; I mourn for my child who left me at my own desire. What a struggle it has cost me—this separation—only a father can conceive!

"Nelly sends day after day to ask when you are expected, and says she wants you, and charity wants you.

"Poor Meteor wears his tongue away, howling—his eyes weeping for you; he breaks his chain regularly once a week. I would keep him with me by night as well as day, but he harasses with his restless, fruitless seeking for you, reminding me I am alone. Everything has gone wrong since you left; they forget to put my boots in my dressing-room, and frequently I have to walk bare-footed down stairs. Power is not here to heat the water, and I shave with it half cold, half full of soot. Hipps in North Wales cannot air my sheets in South England, and I get into bed with a cold shiver, and rise unrefreshed. During the campaigns I spurned comfort, and rested calmly on the sand in the desert; I feel old age creeping on me, and need individual care—that of a child above all others. My sweet one, love in all its selfishness woos her, to win her, know. I want you—'tis enough—you will rejoice to come back to me, my darling—won't you, Edith? If Lady Hester can spare her, please

bringing Mary with you ; I have an affection for the girl ; she is my beloved child's friend—my second daughter on this account. Pray present my love and compliments to your aunt, Mr. de Winter, and cousin Emma, saying, I hope to see them at your house, my pet ! where you are mistress, and will surely do its honours to these near and dear relatives. I shall count the days, hours, minutes, seconds, till I see thee, love. Now as ever, your doating father."

The latter part of this letter Lady Hester read aloud. "We shall be most happy to pay Malvern a visit in the autumn ; but Frederick is not mentioned. Are we to consider him included or excluded ?"

"Have compassion on me, Edith !" said Frederick beseechingly.

"Papa omitted this that I might do it the more effectually. Of course you will come, my cousin Frederick !"

"Thank you, thank you, Edith," said the young man warmly.

It now struck Edith why her papa omitted cousin's name. She originally had been meditately silent concerning her relative; her habit had taken the place of intention. She looked confused, and her cheeks burned when she remembered this, which Frederick interpreted to a far different cause.

"How Mary will rejoice," thought Edith, and she bounded to her cousin's chamber.

"Joy, joy for ever," she exclaimed, placing the open letter in Mary's lap, and kissing her forehead, cheeks, eyes, mouth, and chin. "Hail to Mary—you are going with me to-morrow to Malvern."

The mutual delight of the cousins can hardly be described; sufficient to say, when the glow of enthusiastic rapture passed off, Mary gently remarked, "Do we not see the hand of providence in this? Oh, for gratitude to move both. Yes, Edith, you have cause for rejoicing as well as I. I foresaw in your remaining here a store of misery heaped up for time!"

"How so?"

"No matter, I'll explain by and bye; you will trust me I know, my dear."

## CHAPTER VI.

What, oh ! what could I read there,  
 But the depths of love's despair—  
 Blighted feelings, like leaves that fall  
 The first from April's coronal ;  
 Hopes like meteors that shine and depart—  
 An early grave, and a broken heart !

L. E. L.

Once more in Nelly's home the cousins sat /  
 not now the joyous laugh filled that interesting /  
 cot, or grave silence listened to legends of omens  
 and awe. Sadness reigned around. Tears stole  
 down Edith's cheeks, whilst sighs rent Mary's  
 bosom, as Nelly whispered in their ears a tale of  
 woe. The old dame, her dress neglected, and

hair dishevelled, rocked an infant in her arms, who sobbed in his sleep as if he heard and sympathized with their wakeful thoughts. His flaxen ringlets fell in profuse negligence over Nelly's slender arm; his lovely face looked very pale and thin, his eyelids trembled in his restless slumber.

"Poor dear, he has need of rest," Nelly cried. "See his little hands, how worn to threads his fingers are! the veins all show, the sinews nigh spring from the flesh—bone his arm—his neck my spindle mostly seems to imitate; winding round and round its fibrous lines, the mechanism of his life appears. Ah, Wisha, Wisha! my poor wean! I wash his face with my tears as often here I sit and think upon his mother. She has deeply drank the cup of sorrow, and spilt some over this little lamb. I hearken warily to her waking madness, and bring her child to her presence—the only sight that calms the sore stricken creature. In the middle of the night she calls for him, and I place the infant in her arms; she kisses him, and treats him strangely tenderly;



while the boy, roused from his natural rest, gazed at her with fear and love in a sickly mixture, and calls his mother, and tells her to leave him in the same breath. "Thy father betrayed me with fairest guile, then went far from me and thee; he disowns his child. Wouldst thou deny thy mother? With thy father's mouth—his very formed lips? Alaric, Alaric! thou art still mine own! I hate all the world for thy sake, so dearly do I love thee!" Then she squeezes the delicate babe to her bosom, till he pants for breath, and I am forced to loose her deadly embrace, when she will fall back in a swoon, as faint as if I took the heart out of her breast. The doctor, good Mr. Bourne, and myself, we have had nights and days of watching, too intense, too terrible for description. I shut all other help out of doors; I hate to make her story public; and trusting in my guardian and guide, I have been borne up mightily under these trials.

"During her lapse of mind I sent Alaric to Malvern to be cared for; I thought he must die

der the wild usage he met at his mother's  
nds. Oh, her look when she found not her  
ld ! Never, never, never, shall I forget that  
w—those dreadful eyes—that tempestuous  
ght ! Hardly our triple force could hold her  
wn ; the maniac's ravings split our heads—her  
ocity nigh fetched our lives away. The boy  
s conveyed back to Rochelle, like a sheep late  
ught to the fold ; peaceful and gentle she re-  
ved her lamb.

The doctor said such another struggle would  
tainly kill her. We must risk the child's life  
his mother's sake.

Nelly detailed other events concerning the  
anger invalid, which had taken place since  
ith's departure—how she desired to be placed  
some way of earning her livelihood ; when  
lly mourned for her own child, who could best  
nt out what might be done. Thus much she  
w of her history, that the sufferer came into  
t part of the country, where she believed her  
band's friends resided. Subsequently other

thoughts and discoveries made her relinquish this search, and she was getting impatient to leave Nelly, who she feared to impoverish by her long stay, and whom she saw no way of repairing for all her kindness. When the little Alaric was stolen by gipsies, and singularly recovered by a handsome stranger, who, giving his card at the door, as soon as she had read, the mother fell into a desponding fit, from which, however, she was restored; and Nelly said, wrote a note to the address written on the card, which was immediately answered. From that day she remained in a state poised between life and death, as Dr. Pomfret declared the aberration of intellect under which she laboured was the most prominent feature of her malady, and which rendered it, in his opinion, very dangerous.

The day before the cousins visited Rochelle, she had fallen into a heavy sleep, which Dr. Pomfret judged, if it lasted long enough, might be the prognosis of her ultimate recovery. In all respects he considered the disease approached

a crisis, which should determine the case. Nelly added that Mrs. Denham (as the stranger preferred being called,) remembered with grateful and peculiar interest, the fair girl who opened the door to her, caressed her baby-boy, and loosed her wet things on the night of her arrival in the village. Nelly had often since then spoken of Edith, until the stranger longed to see her again, and unbosom her mind to so feeling a creature; and one who would certainly assist her with gentle counsel, and sympathize in her grief. Often in her ravings she broke from insanity to partial reason, and asked, "had Miss Leslie returned?"

Early the following morning Edith was sent for by old Nelly; her nurse had put on a milk-white kerchief, well starched and ironed smooth. Her hair had been arranged in its wonted order, and her apron betrayed not a wrinkle.

"You see me tidy; I have been enabled to dress at last, ma vourneen; indeed the sick one herself

told me, I did not look natural to her. Poor thing! she has awakened sane at last, but so exhausted, I fear she will bid this world goodnight ere long. If her soul be cared for above what matter how soon she leaves us? She desires to see thee, my darling! Oh, my jewel! thou hast brought good luck to my old eyes. I feel hopeful and happy since you are near me once more. The ivy becomes part of the young tree it binds—so would I wind about thee, ever looking up at thy tall stem. Thou hast grown, my child, since leaving us, my blessing! nor hast thou forgotten thy old ivy," said Nelly, as she sorted several pounds of black lamb's wool (a great rarity in England, where it is generally dyed, instead of being a natural growth,) and which Edith had brought from the wild hills of Wales as an acceptable present to her nurse, who might amuse herself spinning the yarn, knitting stockings of it for her winter wear.

"She is a lady, my dear," continued

"bred and born ; this secret I would whisper ye ; and to be sure she has such high ways with her sometimes, you'd think the queen was not good company enough for the same ; or, at the very least, was her younger half-sister. Her courtliness came out in her illness, when she'd order me to bring "her robes, arrange her coifs, and dizen her." Poor thing, her madness discovered the pride that was wrapt up in her breast, and hardly concealed by rags on the night she came amongst us. Do you remember her lofty bearing, her shapely form ? Ah ! sadly fallen away are those goodly proportions ! Softly, *ma vourneen*, she calls me !"

A faint voice issued from the inner apartment ; and Nelly, as promptly as age would allow, answered the summons.

"Well, my child, how dost thee now ?"

"Without pain, dear Nelly, but very, very weak. I heard a voice I well remember. Tell me, do I dream ? or was it Miss Leslie's ?

"The blossom I reared—the same, sweet lady!" She offered an ejaculatory prayer in foreign tongue, and then continued: "I read in the doctor's looks the writing on my tomb-stone. I feel his testimony confirmed here," she said, placing her hand on her side—"the more do I long to see that lady ere I die. I feel this hope holding me back from the gaping dungeon, warding off the clutch of the inexorable jailer. Hasten this last, best service you can render me; if the cherished daughter of modesty and soft fortune dares approach one on whom a curse lies—whom a stigma blights."

"I am here," said Edith, taking the invalid's hand, "I hope to see you recover quickly, and continue to your child a mother's care and instil a mother's precepts."

"Oh no! dear lady, never may I be spared; my life is ebbing, my time is shortening fast. Here I offer my thanks and blessing for the kindness you showed me and my infant, in our day of distress."

"Our equal Father first," said Edith, "Nelly second, and me last."

"I rendered him," she said, pointing to the heavens, "my instant tribute; Nelly, that faithful, admirable woman, in her person has reconciled me to the whole Protestant church. I was at enmity with them till she spoke gentle reason—true religion arrayed in all charity, to my harassed soul. She has nursed my body, and tended my immortal part with an assiduity and faithfulness that in this world can only be repaid (by a beggar,) with her prayerful thanks. You I have not seen till now—'tis a petition answered, I feel this interview permitted to me. Oh, lady! refuse not my poor acknowledgments, or you close my mouth, and quench my secret. That silence must soil one more—an innocent and helpless babe, ere the mould cover his mother—a victim of reproach!—a child of sighing and tears."

Her burning hand pressed Edith's arm, and



her large black eyes were fixed upon her—larger—~~more~~ and darker—they gloomed against the pale—~~the~~ cheeks, that seemed to retreat before those rolling—~~eyes~~ orbs in blank dismay, at the threatening ~~disintegration~~ of the whole fabric; her eyes ~~fathomed~~ Edith's heart, and found encouragement there.

"I may proceed—I have your attention—~~now~~ Lady, you are affluent, you are tender, you are ~~affluent~~ charitable! deign to pity my little one when I am gone! Oh, promise me to aid the orphan child, to stanch his tears!"

Edith, unable to speak, kissed the infant, who slept on its mother's pillow.

"All praise be to my Maker due! all gratitude to thee, my infant's friend!" cried the lady; and exhausted she fell backwards on her couch.

"'Twill last but a moment," she whispered, "don't leave me so—I recover—I am yet alive!" raising herself to her former position. Edith begged she would rest a little, and at any time

command her attendance, as she would be near and ready to give the audience she desired.

Nelly entered, with a glass of bark and portwine, which after the invalid had drank, new life seemed to enter into her, and she commenced her story.

"Remember," she said to Edith, "'tis true; heed the experience of one who, young like yourself, was courted and flattered, and finally cruelly betrayed and deserted by evil man. Oh! may thy lot be happier cast—thy life less abruptly terminated. Friends surround thee—I had none; a father thou canst boast—I was early taught to forget him. Yet have I not utterly, for all that, in those many years. I love the shadow still I have with me in my dreams; he, last of all those I once knew, remains beside me."

In nearly the following terms the stranger gave her melancholy history, in many detached pieces through exhaustion and severe suffering;

her chronicler will faithfully endeavour to condense what it took many days of weakness to tell, religiously preserving the incidents and style of the whole.

## CHAPTER VII.

Pray thee, maiden, hear him not !  
Take thou warning by my lot.

L. E. L.

What my christian or surname were, I have  
 forgotten ; but this I believe, my birth was almost  
 noble. A proud peer (my mother boasted) owned  
 his daughter ; her carriage was ineffably  
 light ; tall enough she seemed for a nobleman  
 to have given her relationship. ' My lady,' the  
 servants called her. My father I last remember,  
 when he raised me in his arms, and kissing, told  
 me to love him till he should return. No com-  
 mon dress he wore—a livery rich in gold lace. I

marked his buttons, I played with them; my mother often whilst he was absent spoke of my father's being a protestant—not what I must become; she seemed to lament over him for this. Whether my mother was at enmity with my father's family I cannot tax my memory; but from the time he left home I saw none of them. Accounts arrived that her husband had been murdered! The shock to my widowed parent appeared dreadful. I was not suffered to enter her chamber for days, nay, weeks. They whispered me she was very sick; I dreamed of bloody hands, and sharp knives for years afterwards. I remember they used to watch by my bedside the long night through, and drive away the assassin when I called.

My mother recovered, and hurrying me away to another country, placed me in a convent.

My nation, my fellow-people, I knew not till latter years, when I learned I was English; but my name and family were strictly concealed. She bade me farewell, and I never saw her from that

scarce remembered hour. She was austere, and I feared her.

At this early period of my life I cherished my father's memory before my mother's, which many took pains to show me was very sinful; as my mother they alleged to be a sister of the true church, whereas my father died an heretic. A girl in the establishment, about twice my own age, and a pretender to great sanctity, used to tease me much upon the same theme, and one day went so far as to declare he could not go to heaven, for that he was without the pale of the church.

My fury was too great for utterance. I seized her hand, and bit a large piece out of it! Blood poured from the wound; she fainted; yet so seriously had my filial love been outraged, that I stood steadily enjoying my revenge, nor did I blanch in the slightest degree. For this I was visited with severe penance; but I never could be brought to humble myself before that girl. I hated her with a fiendish hate.

I had been willed, as it were, to the nunnery, and taught that I must please our old abbess in everything. Indeed she was very fond of me; my lively disposition and the natural independence of my manners delighted her. She was wont to observe, "Ennui could not come near the door of the room her *petite* occupied."

I frequently accompanied my patroness to the private apartments, where I was regaled on apricots and early fruits, sent as presents to our founder, by the boarders' parents, and the distinguished friends of the abbess. She was an amiable and pious lady; and when she attempted to assume a look of gravity or severity, her naturally benign countenance belied her purpose. The ludicrous expression given to it upon such occasions caused the oldest nuns to smile, whilst the younger broke silence, laughing uncontrollably, and were accordingly awarded a penance suitable to their offence.

The Marquis de Saza, the abbess's uncle, (a very old and infirm man) lodged near our convent.

The heads of the church and community paid him every homage : it was expected he would leave a considerable amount of property at his niece's disposal. During my childhood, as a recreation, I used to be taken to the old man's house to amuse the tedious hours of his helpless age. Like two children together, we frequently played from morning till dark. These were seasons of peculiar invigoration to his decaying body ; he learned to look for me as a child for its beloved toy. The marquis was decrepid and very attenuated ; as a young Irish boarder said, "he'd have made but a poor shadow for a man of the least reasonable proportions." Both his sunken grey eyes squinted so inveterately that it was impossible to determine which way his attention was directed—his notice given. This defect added another singularity to the quaintest figure I ever remember. Halt in body and in speech, I guided the one, and explained his meaning to those around, with something of the pride and precision



with which an elder child interprets its baby brother's toothless sounds.

At length he became bed-ridden, and my mirthfulness failing to excite him any longer, on my most laborious attentions to wring a smile from his parched lips, disappointed and fatigued I sought another playfellow.

His prostration of strength and reason had lasted a long time, when, one morning, nearly suffocating me with her triple chin, tears and kisses, the abbess told me, in great distress, that her kinsman was no more. I heard the announcement as a thing expected, yet feigned great sorrow on her account; wondering all the while she should give way to weeping, who had constantly very philosophically addressed me upon the probable issue of her relative's age and infirmities, and commended prayers to be put up for his happy release.

She invited me to go and see him lying in state—early, before the doors were open to the

public. Striving to support a doleful countenance, I proceeded to the apartment, holding the hand of *la bonne mère*. The walls were hung with sable velvet, upon which many coats of arms were richly emblazoned.

Surrounded by all the pomp of wealth, the old man was sustained in a sitting posture by mechanism, habited in a dress studded with costly gems. The heir-loom jewels of the family of de Sasa were crowded on the mortal remains of its last representative. Rich and handsome beyond measure or description was this attire; and his delicately washed hands and face made him more attractive than usual; for the practice of taking snuff had increased with his wrinkles to such a degree as to disguise the colour of his skin, which partook of the tone of half-tanned leather.

Indeed the abbess, who was particularly averse to this sense-exciting weed, could not approach her venerable uncle's chamber without sneezing; and whilst she remained with him, kept up a constant artillery of the same convulsive sounds,

to the confusion of conversation and my infinite amusement, whom she chose for her companion on these visits, as I was left an hostage for her emancipation. This day, as she drew near the door, the force of habit caused her to sneeze upon which every vestige of my sobriety vanished and I laughed outright. She was compelled to smile at her own simplicity, and hardly checked the rising symptoms of her former weakness.

The holiday appearance of my old playfellow struck me so very forcibly that I began really to doubt his spiritual absence, and cried out: "Why, my mother! the beau marquis! he looks better than ever!" She gravely motioned me to kneel. On each side of his couch we bent, and prayed for the departed, repeating some litanies, and telling our beads.

This is usually a very solemn service; but my extreme youth, and the circumstances of my intimacy with the marquis, rendered me an unfit companion in such a duty. The abbess was materially to blame for associating me in the

formance of it. I ever and anon looked up  
my devotions with trembling suspicion  
the marquis: presently I heard a creaking  
, and the stiff form of the old man pressed  
o the ground! With difficulty I extricated  
elf, screaming so violently that I brought all  
servants of the establishment to my assist-  
. One of the pulleys had given way, and  
ad the sudden recumbency of the body,  
h, although naturally explained, occasioned  
o shrink with horror from ever attending the  
days of the dead.

Whatever instances of levity occur in these  
niscences I would not have supposed as ap-  
ed by me, upon reflection suitable to my age,  
levant to the seasons of their occurring; but  
necessary consequence of the strict discipline  
h, cursing a smile, caused the event to be so  
unt, that when suddenly suggested, it required  
othing more than natural to restore imme-  
e equilibrium to the system. Others are  
riptive of the reckless temper of the times,

and much that may appear artful and disingenuous in my conduct, (and the sin of which, I bless my Maker for having given me light to perceive and time to deplore) emanated from my education; one of the earliest inculcated principles being that truth was sinful, if it militated against the church, and a falsehood laudable that supported or gained her any accession of influence; blessed was that individual reckoned, who by any means trapped another to becoming a member of the catholic body. Yea, violence (if successful to this end) was praiseworthy. Thus truth, once set at nought, became universally disrespected.

Gratitude has caused me to take a deep interest in the trivial incidents connected with the first human friend who taught me to feel this delicate sentiment—at a time when wiser heads than mine gave him credit for absolute forgetfulness, and insensibility to worldly business, or love—that warm current supposed only to run through young veins, to be chilled or rendered sluggish and selfish by age—this motion ruled his last days; it

was to be proved after his death. Unseen by mortal eye, he turned a slender key in the lock of his cabinet, that had not known such affinity for more than ten years, and though rusty, yielded to the pressure of his persevering fingers. He unfolded a lengthy deed that lay within; it was the Marquis de Saza's last will and testament. With his own hand he now entered a codicil, bequeathing the sum of thirty thousand francs to the little Josephine, to accompany his gold snuff box, which I am affectionately enjoined to preserve with the circumstances of its capture, which he was wont to repeat, and always in a spirit of admiration as following.

"After a tough resistance, having boarded an English frigate, and desiring a young man on deck to yield his sword, in obedience to the laws of conquest—'Never to my country's enemies! 'tis too good steel and true,' exclaimed the dauntless patriot, hurling it into the splashing waters. 'You may pocket this snuff-box—it is all you

have a right to demand. I rifled it from one of your crew, when he lay like a log on the fore-castle, and while his shroud was preparing.' ”

From this accidental circumstance the marquis dated his taking snuff, as what the box contained he pronounced might have tempted a fish to leave the sea, lest his nose should be washed from the delicately odorous grain. Whilst he remained his prisoner, the marquis showed the young officer much attention and kindness, and ever preserved this relic as a token of him.

I have the box to this day, polished and bright (from always wearing it about me) even as his memory which enhances the gift.

Upon assuming the white veil, and becoming a novice, I willed the thirty thousand francs to the convent, and thereby set at rest the jealousies of many, and fulfilled the instructions of my ghostly father, who recommended this proper sacrifice.

After four years of my noviciate had passed away, I became desirous of taking the black veil ;

the only obstacle to my wishes was, the indomitable antipathy with which I regarded our superior. Whenever I was led to confession, I used to express this dislike of la mère, (as she was called) and desired the priest's patience with me till I had by prayers and penances, mortifying my proud spirit, humbled myself so as to accept the seal of my profession of faith, and consecrate myself to heaven and heavenly tempers.

This woman was a severe task-mistress ; a smile became in her sight a crying sin—a laugh, utter abomination. It was the opinion of many that she had never given way so far as to commit a trespass of such enormity ; indeed I verily believe she did not know how to smile, and a laugh was a conundrum of the old puzzler's she did not dare to solve. An imperturbable rigidity of manner and feature stamped her character.

The outward world had no charms for me, who was comparatively speaking an infant when I left it. Its joys, its sorrows, were alike unknown to me.



I determined upon a nun's life in conformity to the frequently expressed desire of the abbess, upon whom I looked as a mother ; and secondly, as becoming my age, which was advancing toward mature womanhood ; and thereby to change the current of the monotony of my life, from one cold stream to another. Curiosity formed no small part of my resolution. Several beautiful creatures, whom I had long admired at a distance, and received instruction among other boarders and novices at their hands, I wished to associate with, and form attachments with those I could only now revere at a distance.

Their private gardens, which I learned were extremely beautiful, I wished to visit. Their community rooms, (where I understood all breathed incense that rose direct to heaven) I desired to inhale the inspired atmosphere, and be accounted one of the sacred throng. To have my name surely registered on high—which I was taught to believe the result of my willing

sacrifice of myself to him who sustains the vast firmament, who overrules the destiny of man.

The event about to take place was published to the world; the day arrived; the chapel was thrown open to a great concourse, who witnessed the pompous ceremony. Gorgeously dressed, I followed the priestly train, wearing white robes, conducted by nuns deeply veiled. I knelt before the altar, I adored, and made a formal profession of the leading articles of my faith, when I arose, and delivered a previously arranged speech or address to the congregation. I caught the eye of one in that multitude, whose intense admiration, centred in me, made a deep impression upon his object. Confused, I faltered in my recital, which the bishop immediately concluded. I was led behind a screen; the nuns cut off my hair, which was exceedingly luxuriant; I was dressed in the homely garb of the convent, and the thick black veil screened my features.

A new procession formed—the sisters immediately preceding me held wax tapers; the priests'

apparel had been changed to black, the drap mortuaire was raised, and I prostrated myself. This cloth of the dead heavily pressed around me whilst passive I lay ; nor for fear and awe, during that dreadful suspense, could recal the prayers and litanies commanded for repetition, to keep my soul fervent during the interval. Exquisitely chanted by the nuns was the requiem ; the pall was taken up : faint with the smell of the incense that (as it were) saturated the cloth, I leaned

upon the arm of the nun who was to be my future companion for time and eternity. She thought me overcome with the exercise of devotion. The priest sprinkled my dress with holy water, and pronounced the anathema unto all who should attempt or cause me to break my vows. As I was fast sinking, my veil was raised to give me air. I took one broad survey of the assembled throng. Once more I saw that face, and fainted in my sister's arms.

My subsequent knowledge of my companions gave me but slight interest in any of them. I

found nuns like other women, subject to the same ebullitions of temper, and removed only in name from the common order of beings enclosed in the convent. Lay sisters, who ministered to our comforts, and performed the menial offices, now presented to my mind the greater variety of life.

The boarders, novices, and nuns, with the heads of the convents, exhibited a mass of humanity prone to err, but resorting to severer corrections in penances than the external world can offer.

Yet why should I so decree against my own evidence of sense and sensation? Ah me! no, these scarce prepared me for the trials of a world I knew nothing of, and which experience has shown me to be more drear in their terminations than could have been suggested to my most bitter fancy; for *penance extracts the sting of conscience*; whereas earthly sorrows rankle so deep as to create torments that bring unto death.

As without, so within the convent, there were a few in our number who deserved to be called saints, and whose lives appeared as one long or

short prayer. These were still at a distance from me, for I felt not advanced enough in grace to meet them; it may be, there were thoughts that disturbed my peace; there was certainly a companion walking invisibly with me where'er I moved.

An insipid tenure of years lay before me, and I sickened upon the contemplation. I had never felt so before. I began to entertain an inquisitive mind concerning the moving events of the universe beyond those walls that I in vain tried to surmount with my eyes; they seemed to end in the skies, whither we were all bound—a destiny that intrusive worldly feelings caused me to revolt against.

I was fond of children, and loved their playfulness, which was a relaxation to my devotional exercises, with which day was replete, and night afforded no termination, as in its dark watches we were summoned from our beds to adore in chapel before the figure of the Virgin, and our patron Saint Lucy, the martyr.

There was a little girl to whom I was particularly partial—Marie D'Aubigny. She was exceedingly intelligent, and one of the best pupils in my class—for part of the revenues of the convent was acquired through the education of children of the nobility and gentry of Paris. Marie was an only child, and an heiress; her parents lived not far from the establishment that received her as a day scholar. She was a remarkable and beautiful infant; her *Bonne*, Zieka, brought her every morning, and returned for her in the evening. This little girl, and three daughters of an Indian officer, who had been received as boarders, were among my favourites. I need not tell you they loved me in return, and evinced their affection in various *petits soins*. Marie brought me sweetmeats from the shops, which she crowded in her tiny hands, so as to be asked who these were intended for; when she would say, "my teacher, *sœur Josephine*—the tallest, the handsomest, the kindest lady nun in the convent." At length her reiterated expressions to the same intent became

a subject of notice among the student  
neighbouring college; and the nurse was  
by innumerable questions as to who the  
Josephine was—my age, my height,  
whether the child was a good judge of  
and might be depended upon. One youth  
in particular, tormented her with questions  
said he was “rare good-looking, and would  
flower in any ladies’ drawing-room;”  
would add, “that is too good for him as  
’Tis easy to see that he wears the cap  
seeks the cowl; so I’ll take no more of  
those sparkling eyes, and the curly hair  
gallant is about putting under soap and  
it may be trotté and ready for his black  
master.”

Zieka was a German, and a Moravian  
professed a sovereign contempt for the  
catholic, and boldly avowed she hoped  
the fille would not lessen herself by joining  
papists; her true *Bonne* would take

sweet innocent should not attend the nunnery after coming to a discretionable age."

I was constantly in the habit of hearing such language when I attended the parlour to receive my pupil. My religious oaths bound me to confess the most trivial circumstances of my daily life to the priest—how much more the substance of these heretical interviews; but something, loving mystery within, made me silent upon the subject, and in order to receive the penances I knew I deserved for this breach of the rules, I told grievous falsehoods of myself, and obtained penances which in my sophistry I attributed to this offence, and performed cheerfully. Often Zieka, intolerant of our system, in her national tongue and broad mouthing German honesty, pronounced me to be a living reproach upon the unnatural religion that could shut up youth and beauty in dim cellaries, (as she called our cloisters) declaring that only ugliness, and lovers of deeds that shun the light, ought to veil themselves in darkness, remarking: "If you were truly religious, you



ought to come out of those dens, and do weak souls good abroad by your ripe example and blessed precept.

"I honestly believe," continued the *bonne*, "if it were a matter of only talk and reason, that it would stand to sense, I am a better and a holier person than you, and deserve a higher place in the skies, if through my dependance upon one sole help in heaven and out of it, I resist the manifold temptations of the world, passing through them all on

my way to glory—than you, shut out from trial and temptation, with your dozen and one-hundred-and-ninety-nine-and-fifty saints, angels, and spirits, prayers, incense, and penances, self-inflicted, and not willed from on high. Shame! in this way to give yourself and others the praise of your salvation, which only one died to seal. 'Tis not clear to me you gain it either; they will all—the sin-begotten sacrificial substitutes—be thrown in the fire hereafter, and, like the gunpowder that the priest discovered, blow up in a stifling smoke

that will suffocate you, if you don't mind. Where is your faith?"

These were among the arguments that first shook my belief in the holiness of the obligation that bound me to seclusion for life.

I always wore this rosary—'twas my mother's, and her last gift to me, a rich one, and I was taught by my relation to value it, for its sacred merit, more even than for its intrinsic worth. This was a constant source of complaining to Marie's *Bonne*, who would exclaim: "Throw off the gilded chains that bind you, soul and body; burn the trash consecrated by a priest! can man make holy anything? Corruption his sickness! corruption his health! corruption his life! corruption his death! The worms he carries in his body will feed on him in the grave. The Bible that tells us of man's weakness from the fall, and ever since, tells us but of one man upon earth who could indeed bless, or remit sin; and that man was Jesus Christ—the ever-blessed Son of the most high God! Rosary, beads—that, like

the bubbles your prayers are—will burst before they reach courts where nothing of man's device is borne."

*L'Allemande* always concluded by observing, when I showed symptoms of impatience lest our conversation should be overheard: "Isn't deception in the middle of your religion? You should have no cause for concealment; broad as the day your light should shine, nor fear a blast from e'en the devil's mouth!"

One wintry morning—it was later than usual—my class assembled in the school-room. The *gouvernante-nuns* had taken their places, and the season of instruction had commenced. I still waited in the parlour for Marie, and wondered she did not appear. No note had been sent to the convent declaring her parent's intention of detaining her; and I thought, as the sun shone through the grated window and lit up the icicles that festooned the iron bars, my charge could hardly be prevented by the badness of the weather, or any reasonable cause of delay have retarded

her approach. I walked the little room employing my time in a few religious meditations the superior had enjoined.

"I heard the great gates without swing back. I thought this unusual, as the wicket was sufficient to admit the party. A child crying, and a hurried number of footsteps alarmed me. The door was thrust open, and Marie, rushing to my arms, exclaimed: "Oh, *sœur Josephine!* my poor nurse, she is hurt—she is badly hurt—she has fallen!"

All sobs and tears, the child's affliction gave me great pain. I was confused, and hardly knew what I did. Presently the poor woman was borne into the room by a young man, upon whom I looked with much curiosity and interest, although the moment called for my instant attentive devotion to the sufferer. The youth gently laid his burthen on the sofa, and turning to me with an embarrassed air, explained the cause of the misfortune. I remembered I was unveiled, and drew the curtain over my face.

After this act he seemed to fear delay, and immediately withdrew; yet not without turning upon me a glance I can never forget. He was handsome, young, and bore the insignia of a student of the college.

"Monsieur Eugene is very good, is he not, chere Josephine?" said the child when he had departed.

I examined the Bonne's arm, which suffered so severely in her fall upon a slippery run in the street the boys had made for the purpose of sliding, that the anguish it occasioned nigh deprived her of sensation.

In a half-faint she was conveyed to the convent. After a few restoratives and poulticing I left her tolerably easy. She insisted upon returning with Mademoiselle Marie, the same evening. For the present, I desired she should remain undisturbed in this apartment, and recommending her to the care of a lay sister, with my charge sought the school-room. This was an eventful day. About noon I was apprized that Major Bygrave—the

father of my three other favourite pupils—had arrived from India, and desired instantly that his children should be brought to him. He had not seen them for ten years.

The two youngest, Emily and Caroline—then infants—with their eldest sister Sophia, were left at the establishment. Sophia was now a lovely girl of fifteen; Emily and Caroline were eleven and twelve. Their mother was dead; and their father's duties bound him to his post till thus late. All joy, all rapture, the children begged me to convey them to their father. Poor dears! not one of the little flock knew him, but through this hallowed title, cherished fond imaginings of the individual who bore it. Veiled, I proceeded to the reception-room of the convent.

Our abbess bore the major company. Uttering a scream of joy, the children rushed to his open arms. Overflowing with parental tenderness he kissed them, and bedewed their heads with tears of affection. He held each at arm's length, gazed earnestly in her face, and again hugged her to his

breast, while the children could only utter, "mon père, mon père, mon père !" The abbess wept—I joined her—suddenly he exclaimed in English, "what do they say?"

We did not understand him, and questioned a sister, who acted as interpreter.

"My children! speak to me! My own darlings! in the language your mother died speaking; your father lives to address you!"

The little creatures hung about his neck, and kissed the words as they came; the eldest girl slightly comprehended his meaning, and finding she could not interest him by signs or sounds, burst into a flood of tears.

The scene was painful beyond measure; the children's passionate French, the father's melancholy English, mingled unintelligibly; reproofs, regrets, were unavailing. Groaning in his agony he embraced them once again, and, endeavouring to calm himself, declared, "the last thing he desired or looked for was that his babes should have forgotten their native tongue. He could

not speak French—he could not understand them; he begged, entreated, and offered any sum that a good English teacher might be immediately found, and that they should learn nothing until they were perfected in their mother-tongue.

His request was complied with, and the following morning I attended in the parlour with my interesting pupils, and a student from the university (who was reading for the priestly office) was introduced as their instructor. He was a young man of acknowledged piety and much esteemed in the college. What was my surprise upon discovering Monsieur Eugene! the hero of the preceding day, whose face, the first of all human faces, made an impression upon me—the hour of my inauguration—two years before. I was veiled; I saw him look inquisitively at me. He appeared dissatisfied, and was very cautious in his words and glances, till he should discover whether his wishes were accomplished in my actual presence, or whether another held my place. He sought



for the children to repeat my name, and used many little artifices to extort it.

I was sensibly affected by his seeming regard, and rejoiced for the first time in my life I was nun—to wear a veil that should hide my blushes.

The abbess remained almost continually with us. The previous day I intimated to her my desire to learn the same language, as she had lately told me England was my country; for I had forgotten my mother tongue as utterly as the little girls—my pupils.

She consented, and now informed Monsieur Eugene that sister Josephine was to become one of his scholars.

I saw the young man's joy at the discovery, and felt something within me triumph at this conquest.

I did not reflect, what business had I—a nun—with a lover? What had he—a young priest—to do with a caged bird more than with the free gazelle—were they not at an equal distance from him?

My desire to learn English was purely the result of the scene with the father and his children. I quickly supposed some one of my relatives, on a future day, coming forward to greet me, as a cousin, a niece, or a child ; and imagined our mutual distress at the impossibility of communicating our thoughts to one another. I took my resolution and desire from this circumstance. The selection of a tutor was the result of a fortunate accident, which I could not possibly contemplate, who knew nothing of the moving ~~man~~ without the walls that had sheltered my infancy, and hid my growing years.

Yes ! I began to find control irksome—~~restraint~~ grievous ; I was discontented with my ~~life~~—deprecatd my lot. By degrees Eugene and I became learned in each other's sentiments, and preserved a telegraphic intercourse.

His looks were answered by signs from me. Nor was this all ; in teaching me English, he had many ways of ingratiating himself. I soon began to converse in broken English ; and neither the

superior nor abbess understanding a word, it remained with my pupils to inform them of the purport of our discourse; but their own innocence, and anxiety in their studies (which were prosecuted with filial assiduity, to please dear papa being their whole incentive to industry) we were free from their observation. I learned a new sentiment beside a new language. I was sure Eugene entertained an affection for me, quite as deep as the one he had kindled.

At length our lessons were at an end; and with a look of agony on his part, and a corresponding feeling sinking my spirit to the earth, we took farewell of each other—when to meet only heaven knew.

Some months afterwards I still pined in hopeless solitude, which seemed everywhere, without Eugene. I had knelt in my cell and commended him to the special care of his guardian saint. I did not pray that he should consummate his vows, or I preserve mine. I never confessed the secret that lay at my heart.

My absent manner and perceptible melancholy caused the superior to press me often very closely, upon the subject that saddened my countenance. At length she desisted, believing I was increasing in holiness, and ought not to be disturbed, only pointing out certain salutary mortifications and efficacious prayers to help me on.

When (as I before mentioned) some months had passed in this hopeless state, Marie one morning surprised me by putting in my hands a number of walnuts. "These," she whispered, "Eugene gave me for you, and made me promise not to tell anybody besides."

His name enhanced in my estimation the fruit, which I looked upon as intended to be an omen for future good, that, like the nut, was hard to open, but when this task was over, (which could be accomplished) the sweetness of the reward repaid the exertions used in its attainment.

While I thus pondered, little Marie said: "you

are to open every one yourself, and I am to tell him to-night how you liked them."

I regarded the nuts, wondering what this could mean, when I found one more easily opened than the rest. A thrill of joy and fear ran through my veins—a letter, on the thinnest white paper, was confined within the shells.

I quickly hid it in my sleeve, and repaired to the school-room, anxious the day should wane, that by the sacred lamp in my cell I might read this precious billet.

I took the precaution of telling Marie I thought the nuts very choice, which message she religiously conveyed.

Thus I learned, Eugene was a student in an adjoining college; the day of my enrolment in the sacred band he mingled with the numerous throng, and the first time he saw me vowed eternal homage, and decided upon entering for a priest, thinking this was the only mode of access to the convent. He now declared he had no

farther intention of prosecuting his studies, but waited the earliest opportunity (if I would consent) to fly with and marry me.

He told me to be careful in examining the pumpkins in the vegetable garden, when I went thither to gather some herb more nauseous than another to make into tea, and drink for penance.

You may imagine I was not long in paying this visit, and found a fine pumpkin with a broken stem, that had rolled away from the rest. It was hermetically sealed at one end. I removed the peel, and delighted, transported, perceived another letter. Part of the fruit was scooped out to give it place; I grasped the paper, and ran from the garden to enjoy the banquet in privacy.

Oh, horror! my beaming countenance met the superior's long visage! Stumbling against her in my hurried entrance to the house, la mère staggered and caught the door-post, else she must have fallen.

"Sister Josephine," she cried fiercely, "why is not your veil down? What is this unholy

expression upon your features? What hold you in that hand?"

I made an effort—raised my arm to lower the veil—and at the same instant, putting the letter into my mouth, swallowed it on the spot—then calmly waited a lecture from my mistress, who felt my dress all over; when, ascertaining I concealed nothing, she ordered me to take one more lesson that day for the unbecoming haste of my motions, and dismissed me with a sigh, intended to express her feelings for the condition of my soul.

I had lost Eugene's letter; I had yet saved my own character and his. I consoled myself with this escape.

Another day when the community had retired to worship, some to their cells, others to the chapel, I slipped away to the garden to replenish my supply of nauseous weeds, and my love, if I durst hope. My veil was down. I hurried through the principal walk, and was proceeding to the bottom of the garden, where the prolific

fruit grew, when I was dismayed by the presence of the superior, who emerged from a small forcing-house close beside. She took my arm, and in converse led me round the garden. We arrived at the desired spot.

A large pumpkin was rolled into the middle of the walk.

"What a fine creature!" she exclaimed, and stooped to examine it. With a jerk of my foot, I sent it rolling into a ditch; and when I saw her confusion at the abruptness of this action, humbly petitioned pardon, saying: "Madame Mère, I thought you desired it removed from your path. Have I not done right?"

"Your politeness was roughly administered, though well intended," at length she said, and seemed, on the whole, pleased with my attention. We walked on, and I got deeper in her favour by stating the progress I had made in the embroidery of a splendid dress designed for the Duchess de Bevir. She told me to complete the robe as I had begun, and I should do well.



Some priests' vestments she had reserved when I desired mortification (for cutting and working them is a real penance, as you receive a wound for every stitch, the depth of embroidery is so great—the substance so hard.) I thanked her for this mark of consideration, and told her I should apply so soon as the duchess's robe should be completed, as my fingers would be laid up if I attempted it at present.

We parted on unusually good terms. I took another opportunity of visiting the garden; and

finding my pumpkin in the place I had left it, was re-animated by a letter of love and tenderness. I thought Eugene one of the fairest and best created beings, and felt a lively gratitude for his disinterested affection. I constantly received letters in the same manner, which although as affectionate as it was possible to write, continually reproached me for not contriving to send some token—a note, or a message, to assuage his anxiety for my welfare, and assure him of my fidelity. 'Twere impossible to describe the anxiety

this cost me, as the last thing I desired was to appear insensible of his love. Health and repose fled from me, whilst I reflected how, or in what way, I should overcome the difficulties that hedged me round with thorns.

I could not give Marie a letter; I was confident the child would take care of it; but an honourable feeling, to preserve her as innocent as when she was entrusted to my charge, induced me to refrain from this mode of communication with Eugene.

Marie's nurse I ought neither to give cause to complain of my religion more than she had just grounds for. I felt she might have delivered the letter safe into Eugene's hands; but I at the same time anticipated the derogatory opinions she must entertain for the actors in a love-affair, carried on and fostered within walls consecrated to celibacy. I knew how myself and my whole community must be involved in one destructive fire of ridicule, and feared her unreserved censure upon the church to which I belonged; and upon

which, by yielding to such an impulse, I should sacrilegiously bring disgrace.

Thus with contending feelings was I distracted, until a letter, received in a similar way as the others, in a great measure dissipated my concern, by describing that a slight string attached to a stone should be flung over the wall on the eastern angle, which I was to search for, and just before the vesper-bell rang, I was to attach my letter, which would soon be drawn on the other side.

For a while, the joy occasioned by the intelligence of this device obscured my considerations upon the mode to be adopted for preparing my despatch.

At length I recollected that writing paper and implements were carefully confined to the school-room—not any being permitted in any other part of the house.

This was a precaution, lest the nuns should make use of such materials as a vehicle of communication with their friends, whom they were

only allowed to address through letters previously submitted for the superior's approbation. The inkstands were firmly fastened to the tables; thus again I was at a loss to fulfil Eugene's request; added to which the warder of the school-room kept a vigilant watch over our actions and those of our pupils.

We had a mode of conversing with each other in the convent, which now it struck me to adopt. This was through flowers—a language we all understood. I tied the scented nosegay to the string, and saw it rise, to descend no more.

I longed for my hours of retirement, which were of late devoted to meditating upon my love—not guarding my heart by prayers and mortifications from such intrusive vanities. I threw myself upon the straw mattress, and slept only to dream of him—frequently passing over the midnight watch without attending in the chapel, for which I was visited with severe lectures, and heavy penances from the superior. One was very painful to the delicately nurtured, and which I

having done quite enough to disenchant the most blind worshipper of the fair sex. Had I deserved the reputation for piety some enjoyed, I should gladly have accepted the superior's offer; but on this occasion I brought my unobscured judgment—naturally averse from superstition—to aid my worldly interests, which at this time engrossed my thoughts. La Mère Ursule held me in a sort of fear, coupled with a natural dislike we had early formed for each other, and never mentioned this subject again.

I felt Eugene was mine, and I was Eugene's. I durst not maim his bride; I cherished my beauty for his sake.

All the horrors of the revolution stalked abroad. Whereas we learned nothing of the delights and interests of the wide city that surrounded us in its days of peace and affluence—now we heard much of the dire scenes enacted without the convent. This was politic—to teach our mind to shrink from exposure to the torments of the world, and to feel a greater reverence for the

oaths that bound us for life to those dim walls ; nay, to thank heaven for our early deliverance from a world of terrors.

Marie had been left in the convent, her parents fearing to send for her while the streets were slippery with blood. Upon the even of the Revolution I sought Eugene's despatch, which contained the following :—

“ I have left the college, never to return. This is the last letter you must seek from me. I have taken up my quarters at the hôtel opposite, and watch from the window the walls that immure my love. I dare not approach the gates in the day time ; by night I shall never be absent from them. I can mingle with the rabble, without encouraging suspicion. The convent will hardly escape plunder ; the people are determined to emancipate her slaves. Have no fear in the terrible moment. I shall be near to rescue you, my soul's joy ! my Josephine ! If you can escape before, remember I am at the portal or the postern, wherever my own love first alights

upon the world and rejoices her adorer. You see I have provided for your timidity as well as your guard. Farewell—live till I clasp thee to mine heart.

EUGENE.

An enclosed sheet was from the mother of two children in my class, who I knew to be an acquaintance of Eugene's. I had spoken to her in the parlour, but the mistress of the apartment was always present, and nothing but educational topics engaged us. I saw she often desired to be alone with me, but this was never effected. Her note ran thus :—

“ Dear Josephine,

“ I am ready to witness your marriage with Eugene whenever he is fortunate enough to provide for your escape ; till then, ma belle, adieu. Your friend,

ISABELLE CORBEAU.

My doubts, my fears, my hopes, my joys, were now all happily answered, and I was ready to seize the first opportunity to depart from

bondage. I thought of the great gates ; I longed to press the threshold for the last time. All was bustle and confusion in the convent. A collection of the most valuable plate was made, and an immense pit dug for it in the garden, where it was buried by night between the hours of eleven and twelve ; we made a grand procession, and moved off to the chapel to renew our vows, and ask protection from the patron saint of the convent—Sainte Lucie.

We knelt before a glass shrine containing the cloth traditioned to have bound (B) the head of a celebrated martyr of sacred history, when it was conveyed to Amicus, and towards which we were taught to exhibit the profoundest veneration.

The smouldering rags seemed disturbed, but presently settled into their former tranquillity ; from this omen we presaged that although an assault might be made upon the house, we should finally escape triumphant from our doubts and dangers. This was in a measure answered the following day ; for a body of soldiers, under the



command of a nephew of the abbess, was sent to take care of the convent, and lodged in the offices round the court-yard, which were immediately abandoned to their accommodation. The nuns were removed to two of the most central apartments, where we spent the time in prayer and fasting, the house being lighted up with wax tapers in honour of the Virgin, and to propitiate her who could keep all evil from us. Much faith was held in candles (C) thus consecrated.

Constant firing was kept up between the soldiery and populace, who made several attempts to invade the convent. Hardly a pane of glass remained whole in the windows, that higher than we could reach, fell in shivers upon our heads; bullets lodged in the walls, and flying about us in every direction, it was a miracle that we escaped with our lives, much more unharmed by a single shot. I continued in close waiting upon the old abbess, who went into fits a dozen times in the course of an hour; she was so terrified by the scenes enacting around her.

As for me, I was in better spirits than usual, and each drooping heart in the convent looked to me for support. To attend the faint of one, to console the fears of another, I was in constant requisition, and constrained to take more nourishment by the superior; who, being entirely confined to her bed through terror, liked not less than the rest an active, untiring companion and attendant. I went through immense fatigue, yet felt it not. My health, my hopes, my all, were abroad with Eugene and freedom. In the midst of this disturbance, the company that guarded us was ordered to another post, where soldiery were thought necessary.

I was with the abbess when her nephew—a gentleman-like and handsome young man—came to tell her this news; in the midst however of his communication the old lady swooned in my arms. All was silent. The soldier lingered. "Sœur Josephine," he said.

I turned hastily towards him.

"You are then that lady?"

"I am," I replied.

"May I see your face?"

"Pardon me, sir, my word is sufficient."

"This letter can only be given to a black-eyed lady, whose features shall answer the description I have received."

'Twas Eugene's hand-writing; I raised my veil, the officer bowed respectfully, presented the packet, and instantly withdrew. It contained these few words.

"To-night I shall station myself at the great gate; in this disturbance you can surely find exit easy. Come, my love!"

The soldiery departed—I heard the doors close behind them—half an hour flew like ten minutes—an assault was made at the gates—the bolts were giving way, when the warder opened them, and shouldering his bâton, *ex officio*, demanded their business.

The headlong crowd filled the court—the leaders pursued their way through one of the principal passages—already I heard them turn

the door-hasps—I trembled—the abbess had again fainted. I was all but alone—the principal entered—when a parrot, whose cage hung immediately behind the door, cried out, “Vive le roi!”

The man seemed startled, yet pleased, and shouted, “they are all royalists here to the very birds—come along, my men!”

They departed laughing, enjoying the drollery of the circumstance; so easily and suddenly are the purposes of the French altered or turned into another channel.

When she recovered, and I related what had happened, the old abbess blessed heaven and all the holy angels for our deliverance, and made a vow to attend the night-watch in the chapel, where we were to make a solemn assembly.

Several atrocities were committed close to the walls of the convent during this deadly confusion of things. One came more particularly under our sympathy. A poor old lay-brother, who had long served as gardener in our convent, through whom Eugene had procured a map of the grounds,

(which enabled him to direct to a certain quarter the envelopes he chose for his letters) some days before the Revolution was seized with cold shiverings, and removed to the hospital at the college. That immense building was now empty, the students having sought refuge with their friends. The priests hardly escaped with their lives, and dressed in labourers' frocks, so great was the virulence of the populace against the priesthood. Neglected and alone this poor old man had the hospital to himself, his companions in infirmity having crawled forth. Some were killed as soon as they reached the streets; others dragged their wounded bodies into dens and noisome places of all description for a miserable shelter. Frederick Husschmidt was a German, and spoke wretched French. A party of mad chartists seized upon him in the sick ward, and compelled him to walk between them to where several streets crossed.

He was flung on the pavement, and told he should have his life only on condition he exclaimed, in a full clear voice, "Vive la charte!"

l to save his life upon any terms, the old queaked, "Vive la chatte!" A chorus of ous mirth resounded along the streets; iving him a friendly kick, they left the old n to hobble as well as he might to his lodgings, exposed to the cold, for he had taken from his bed in his night clothes. or creature laid himself down for the last n his coarse resting-place, and died in dear t peace.

people of Paris seemed possessed by devils ; this dire season. At one moment the ts committed frantic ravages among their dherents, while the chartists in the same ition outraged all the laws of compact, and y fell upon each other.

as a resolute decree of the abbess to wait ight in the chapel, as only one fragile door ted it from the great iron gates, without could be heard a clamour of human es, that like the stormy ocean, now swollen breaking—now receding, gathering might

for a fiercer rush, and anon dashing tumultuously forth—offered a fiercelike accompaniment to ~~some~~ devotions. Opposite the shrine, where ~~was~~ presented the Virgin Mary closing Saint Lucy's eyes, well pleased with her bodily sacrifice, ~~was~~ knelt in double rows, reaching far into the body of the chapel.

The abbess occupied a vesper-chair close to the altar, (D) where the sacred relics were kept, and the consecrated things. To avert the fits with which she supposed the foul fiend tormented her, she bowed her head, breathing the perfumes that were believed to be ever rising from the holy bones of saints and martyrs, collected in the peaceful urn, from the north, from the south, and from the west of our vast world.

The tradition told us, some had suffered in the great author of christianity ; some immediately subsequent to that period, in the very corner where the light first shined upon man ; and others in distant lands (preaching the everlasting gospel) had met with an untimely doom.

Might we not suddenly and awfully be called to swell the heavenly host? and in fearful earnestness we invoked the Virgin's mediation to avert the temporal judgment threatening us, that, by degrees calm, resigned, prepared, we might leave the earth and enter heaven—not be driven thence. Thus she should intercede, who, highly and above all others promoted in the favour of her king, could insure for our sex and purity ultimate acceptance.

We vowed to correct ourselves with penances, whatever she thought fit, and dedicated ourselves new to her service.

The stained glass in the tall lancet windows returned the light of the triple lamp, that (emblematic of the Trinity) burned night and day without extinction. The glorious images on the painted windows shone forth in powerful relief, and seemed to dance on the opposite columns—a holy and a happy multitude!

The vision attracted our attention and worship. Many believed heavenly visitants were really



among them. The black and white marble that paved the floor seemed covered with this new phenomena. Terror overcame the religion of some, and they motioned to withdraw; when suddenly the whole mystery was explained, and our devotion turned to confusion. The glass came crashing in with showers of stones; one caught the lamp and hurled it to the ground. In darkness we all trembling stood. Without, a blaze of light rose high and intense. A vociferous shout assaulted our ears—destruction was close at hand.

I alone of that withering throng had hope and health in my breathing. I rushed to a drawer where were kept consecrated winding-sheets ready for use. I wrapped the white cloth over my nun's dress, flung aside my veil, and with my face bare, addressed myself to unbarring the door.

"She is right—she does well! the Virgin bless thee, child! Josephine shall save us!" cried the abbess.

This door was a slight one, which filled a

pointed Norman arch, and formed a deep recess in the building, offering no guard, and adding a striking ornamental feature to the chapel. The elaborate carvings of the panels, highly gilt, gave a series of incidents in the life of our Saviour. It was a favourite object of regard to devotees, who at this hallowed portal exercised their chief adorations. Passing through it, not finding time to cross myself, I stood before the great gates. I knew they must yield to the force of the rabble, who, intent upon plunder, and having obtained access through violence, would precipitately pursue the work of demolition. My only hope was a manœuvre that history had hinted to me.

The warder lay bleeding on the ground, wounded by the shower of stones that first alarmed us. He was insensible for aught I knew. This was no time however for deliberation. I took the great key from his bloody hand, it turned in the wards, and the gates flew open, presenting to my eyes a glare of fire, and faces

smear'd with blood, whilst a peal of voices nearly rent my temples.

I wonder how I lived through that moment, and 'tis certain I confronted the dreadful vision some time, for I never shall forget the whole scene. At length, recovering the remnant of my senses—that of horror being the most prominent—I moved, I ran, I fled towards the sanctuary, and had just succeeded in reaching it, when I felt myself overtaken, and turning round, like a hind at bay, faced my pursuers, commanding every nerve for a stand in all the terrible courageousness of despair. They with one consent retired some paces, and straining forth their torches, each demon-looking creature seemed to regard me with something like superstitious awe.

At length the leader approached, and in a voice evidently intended to overcome his own feelings, and scare me if I were an apparition, demanded to have delivered up all the defensive arms in the convent, in the name of the charter and people. The presence of mind that urged me to meet the

ants returned. I replied by drawing from pocket-book a needle-case, and shedding its contents upon my hand, offered it to the dread man, saying, "These are the only weapons we

my success was complete. I looked so long bewildered after them, that, as one by one lights and hideous human candelabra disappeared, I felt as if I never should have sight. I tottered, and falling, was caught by a strong arm, on which I lay to awake, and found me Isabelle Corbeau washing my temples with eau de Cologne; and opening my eyes yet more, beheld myself at liberty, with Eugene by my side, his warm hand clasped in mine. The walls of my friend's house surrounded—no longer a convent immured me.

As soon as my dress could be changed, and I sufficiently recovered, supported by Eugene and Madame Corbeau, I was hurried through narrow and unfrequented alleys—the abodes of ruffians who were abroad that fearful hour—

where rich houses gave them plunder, and wide streets served for their better assembling. It was grey morning—the earliest hour of prayer. We entered a little chapel, where a holy man knelt at matins. The whole was desolate; no human voice but his ascended to heaven! Those who were wont to be his congregation stepped aside to another home. This holy man wooed martyrdom, and feared not death at a mortal's hand. Of all the priests that had fled the city, he alone remained at his post, steadfast to his trust; nor was he molested—e'en the vilest respected Father Baptiste.

“My father,” said Eugene, throwing himself at his feet, “have compassion on thy son—pity the lover! save his mistress! Our tale is short, as 'tis sad. The fair lady before thee (my betrothed) has this night past lost her father. He fell a victim to the wanton, the remorseless rabble. She is an English stranger—an orphan without a guardian, without a home. I am her lover—I would be her husband. Bless thy children,

gracious father ! This lady has come to witness our marriage ; she has known me through my boyhood ; she will declare my honour."

"I will," said Madame Isabelle, approaching, "and am proud to call Alaric Elphinstone my son's bosom friend."

I started—this was a new name to me ; a moment's reflection resolved the doubt. Eugene was his priestly distinction. The old man appeared affected by the nature of our circumstances, and turning to me, said : "My child ! wilt thou be linked for life to this young husband—mingle thy destinies together ? Is thine heart true and fixed ? Is thine hand ready ?"

I burst into tears—I could not reply. Eugene's statement was strange. I feared to disturb it, or confirm what I knew to be composed, in a great measure, of falsehoods. The priest saw my discomposure, and attributed it to the delicacy of my situation.

"Never," said the old man, "during my many years, have I been asked to perform this sacrament

upon so short a notice. 'Tis unprecedented I at least must say."

"Have you, father," inquired Eugene, "often witnessed days so full of blood and mystery as were faint in? Sin, my father! sin is the cause!"

"Thou hast well said, my son!" and the priest commenced the ceremony. 'Twas over—and I wife!

Now for the first time I looked upon my dress; it was *black*; from head to foot I was clothed in deepest mourning.

"An ominous accident," I whispered to Madame Isabelle.

"You shall have white to-morrow." This was all she said, and went forward to attest the paper legalizing our marriage, which sufficiently satisfied the priest.

"Madame! I have seen these characters before! I have given thee the marriage sacrament, or I greatly mistake. I have baptized thy children. Thou hast confessed to me."

"I have, father! you are right," she returned—

"Go, and take my blessing with thee," he murmured.

I was required to sign my name—*Josephine*. I trembled.

"Clifton is but a little word more, my love!" said my husband—"write it, and we are one."

I apprehended his meaning, and wrote a lie!

I had nearly forgotten to mention, that my husband took from his hat a roll of printed paper and manuscript.

"Very good, Alaric Elphinstone, write it, my son," said the priest when he had read. "Take your passport, and leave this wretched country as soon as thou canst."

We were blessed by this holy man. I was invited by Madame Corbeau, our mutual friend, and pressed to my husband's heart. We departed with joy; we returned to the Lady Isabelle's house, where every attention and much kindness were shown me. And here my husband declared his real character, told me he was an orphan, but the fear of offending a rich old uncle (who could not live



very long) would oblige him, for the present, conceal his marriage, and remain in France. The eloquence with which he pleaded the necessity of the sacrifice he had made of his conscience to my weal, quite enchanted me. I forgave the falsehoods to which he had caused me to subscribe. I was happy—I was satisfied.

Through Madame Corbeau's influence a passport was procured for me, and we quitted Paris for Rouen, the Norman capital, where we resided surrounded by every comfort and many luxuries.

Now I became acquainted with something of life, and something of sorrow. There were times when my husband was cold, even to harshness, but I had no one besides to love, and forgave him all. He often left me for weeks together, upon the plea that business required his attendance in England. At length it drew near the time when we should be blessed by a little being, who I hoped would cement our union, and render Alaric more tender and confidential; for hitherto his family affairs were hidden from me, and upon

certain subjects he maintained a rigid silence. One day he came to me—he seemed much agitated, and said, “urgent business called him to London—he would return as soon as possible.”

Our parting was a melancholy one. It evidently cost him a struggle, not much inferior to what I experienced. Oh! how my poor heart has been wrung! Lady! he never returned—I have not seen him since!

“You have heard from him,” whispered Edith anxiously, as Josephine stopped for breath.

A glass of cold water somewhat recovered her, and she proceeded.

The little money my husband had left behind was soon expended. He had declared to me that no address could find him, and that he should be at home again before there could be any necessity for my writing to him. I was in want—my infant was born—no father near to hail him; he was christened Alaric—all his parent had bequeathed.

As soon as I was strong enough I left the

house, sold off every article of furniture, which barely met my heavy bills. I took a mean lodging in the suburbs and became the sole attendant of my babe, striving whilst he slept to embroider little things to sell for our mutual support. I still thought my husband might, he must, return—if for nought else—to see his child.

I fondly hoped in vain. When my boy was a year old I formed the resolution of earning a little money, to carry us to England, and by applying at White's club house (which address was written in pencil and still intelligible upon one visiting card my husband had left behind, and which I had lately discovered among his clothes) trusted to learn something of him. This took me another whole year.

After a weary passage I landed in London. Here the language my husband taught me I found of immense service. At the club I learned that Mr. Elphinstone had left for the country, that Devonshire was his native place, and where

many of his relatives resided. The town nearest this was particularly indicated.

I noted down every direction I received, and although my stock of money was very low, I determined to lose no time, and started by the cheapest conveyance.

Soon all my hoard, but a few pence, was expended. Taking my child in my arms, and a slight bundle containing our little all of raiment and valuables, I traversed miry roads, barely able to pay for a crust of bread by day and a shelter by night. Lastly my halfpence failed, and kneeling and supplicating help from heaven (what man denied) I strove to overcome every obstacle.

For some time pride fed me—pride held me up. I was unknown—I cared not in a foreign land what people, passers-by, might think of the poor traveller. Sullen and proud, I in silence laboured on, till, having performed three days' journey in one, faint, and poverty-stricken, terrified by the thunder and tempest—impelled by a desperate impulse—tempted by its light in

the midst of horror and gloom—I found the door, and asked an alms at this blessed abode.

Having every confidence in her principles, founded strongly upon religion, and her naturally prepossessing and well-bred manners, I unbosomed my great secret to Nelly, and implored her advice. She told me she knew the family of which my husband came—they were of a noble origin, and allied in blood to some of the first people in the land. They were wealthy, and Mr. Alaric had some very fine estates in another county; some relatives and great friends of his resided in this part.

Whether he was at present in this neighbourhood was a question she could not answer.

Ah, madam, said Josephine, seeing Edith was much affected by the issue and proof of her husband's neglectful, remorseless baseness: Ah, madam! you know not the worst for me to learn. He is a Protestant—of a high church family of so long standing as the Reformation.

Never did I hate the religion till compelled to

~~know~~ he was a Protestant. The hour I learned ~~this~~ disclosed all the mystery of my marriage, my ~~des~~ertion, &c. I am not his legal wife in the ~~Ch~~urch of England ; my child is branded with a ~~cur~~se of infamy in the same land—the innocent, ~~help~~less, hapless babe !

After this discovery I determined to prosecute ~~my~~ search no further. I laid plans for retiring to ~~some~~ quiet village, where, by keeping a little school, ~~I~~ might earn an honest livelihood, and support a ~~virt~~uous character, that my name at least, in ~~purity~~, might descend to my tomb-stone.

This was all decided upon. Nelly gave me much judicious advice, and approved my strength of resolution ; desiring only that I might fortify myself by taking another counsellor into my plans—her God and my God !

I should not have deviated from these projects, had not a circumstance happened which most seriously changed my feelings from their first misery to a far deeper, denser shade of woe.

Hear the consummation of man's perfidiousness ! Hearken, and hate the race ! My child was carried away ; my only one stolen from his mother. I was like a creature deranged, till a stranger brought him to my door.

Ah ! soon my joy was to be turned into mysterious, grievous wonder ! Nelly put a card into my hand. It was a duplicate of my husband's ! the same letter-print—the same hand-writing ! the same pencil from the same pocket-book traced the same words—White's Club House, London.

Here they are, my friend ! regard the wondrous twins.

Edith turned the cards over and over in her hand, and confessed them alike in the name and characters they bore.

Imagine, lady ! this father has pressed to his breast his child, yet knew not the infant that clung to him ! He rescued his own Alaric from thieves—he brought him to his mother's arms—the wife he has so cruelly forsaken—the guileless

woman he wooed to make a fit subject for Bedlam.

My revelations are nearly at an end ; oh, heed them, my infant's guardian, and beware of man ! This card was accompanied with much apparent sympathy for the unfortunate mother of the child he rescued. The young man carefully instructed Nelly, were I to ask assistance at his hands, he should certainly attend to my wishes ; at that address (his club) any letter or application to him could be made with ease, and certainty of immediate attention.

Behold the letter I wrote to him. Behold the answer ! and my discomfiture is complete—my story ended.

“ Alaric Elphinstone ! you lately assisted in restoring a child to its mother—the child is your own—the mother your wife—your abused, neglected, and forsaken mistress. She asks you to claim this helpless one—not to brand the infant with the stigma your deeds have put upon his mother. In the courts of your country—by



the rites of your church—you may disown her ; but to one all-seeing eye your conduct is bare. He knows you—her base and perjured husband. She has lived at length to present a father with his child. From henceforth she hopes never again to see you. Josephine is too proud and yet too virtuous to accept favours, that in this land would be impious. By your obligation to the great Almighty, and his work—man—I conjure you, as you value peace hereafter, to cause to be witnessed, to sign, and to seal, (delivering over to me) your acknowledgment of the legitimate birth of your son—Alaric Elphinstone. Let this be his fortune, nor meddle with the infant more. Thou wouldst contaminate him with thy example—thine hands have been on him—'tis enough !

JOSEPHINE."

*" White's Club House.*

" Woman ! I know you not ! I acknow—  
ledge no child ; thou art an imposter, or mad

**the** latter would be the more charitable conclusion  
**to** draw over this otherwise infernal plot. I am  
**alone**

ALARIC ELPHINSTONE."

## CHAPTER VIII.

Oh, my love has an eye of the softest blue,  
\* Yet it was not that that won me;  
But a little bright drop from her soul was there—  
'Tis that that has undone me.

C. WOLFE.

Edith's feelings during the recital of Josephine's trials and privations were entirely of a new order to any she had hitherto experienced, or that tales of misery had produced. To the usual plaint of poverty and want she responded by a deep-drawn sigh, relieving with a ready purse. She soothed the widow, reminding her of the joys prepared for the pious partner she had lost. **Edith dried the destitute's tears with a promise of employment and patronage, and took helpless**

orphans under her peculiar care. But now kindling in her breast, the insult inflicted upon her sex, lighted her eyes with fire, that burned not the less fiercely for the command she maintained over her lips. She felt severely injured—proudly indignant. Outraged modesty! outraged sentiment!

This record of perfidy blasted the romantic imaginings of her youth. The kaleidoscope, her favourite toy, fell shattered before her; and life appeared in its broken fragments and worst confusion. Her picture of a roseate dawn was mildewed o'er—the bloom on the fruit was gone—rottenness at the core! and vice, in shape as wasps and hornets, occupied the place of sweetness, and stings poisoned, where perfume had exhaled. If scientific villany, or brutal coarseness could have approached that girl's presence, both had cowered before her. Those beautiful, those terribly pure, and vengeance-prophetic features! words and warnings of dread import were written there.

When she had perused the last letter—the

signature of iniquity—she rose, and with convulsive energy squeezing Josephine's hand, said in a measured tone : " You will allow me to take one more into our conference ? "

" Your kindness cannot err ; your discretion is sufficient to justify the deed," returned the interesting stranger.

Edith in rapt silence departed, nor whispered farewell to Nelly as she passed.

Mary de Winter was the counsellor she sought, and to her ears recounted the horrors she had heard.

Mary was grieved, and sympathized with the poor Josephine ; but she did not express herself as the ardent Edith expected. She knew more of the world than her cousin could ever learn ; she had suffered in the world, and suspected mankind in general ; and believed the accepted legislators of virtue and equity capable (if it were possible) of even worse than this. This suspicion of the mass was nurtured by constant aggravation,

on the part of her pretended friends, as well as of her enemies and relatives.

Mary employed her ingenuity in devising the best mode of provision for the ultimate support of the stranger; not exciting or supporting Edith in her resentment, or chiding her sensibility. She saw her cousin was young, and inexperienced in the deceits of society, which this peculiar case had brought before her. She knew, the rapid torrent it is impossible at once to dam up; a break-water should be left, over which its energy might gradually be exhausted.

"Mary," said Edith, arousing from a lethargy into which her cousin's philosophic attention had thrown her, "Mary! your indifference concerning the character of the wilful agent of Josephine's calamities, makes me fear you have tacitly condemned all men to the same ignominious grave he deserves; to say little, or, shuddering, think less upon the awful denunciations of retributive justice registered against such an one on tablets of brass. Is Edgar Levison true or false?"

tell me this. He speaks fair—Josephine's lover did the same. Mr. Barrett is blunt, but not base; Jack could not injure a friend, much less a mistress. Your brother, though he is frivolous, yet is harmless. Frederick, forming such an attachment, could never forsake his idol. These are the only young men in whose society I have been. Will neither of them scale the ramparts you have raised around your heart? think awhile. Now I know—Edgar leads the van. Be candid—is it so? triumphs my young champion?"

The quick blush that succeeded the mention of the soldier's name had died away on Mary's cheek, till the conclusion of Edith's sentence recalled it more vivid and lasting.

"I verily believe Edgar honourable, in thought, word, and deed. Can I say more? Is not this enough to convince you, my love? I do not consider all men brethren in sin, but I believe there are more Alaric Elphinstones in the world than you or I wot of, and more injured women

than Josephine. Though various degrees of indignity are offered by the abominable to the weaker sex, yet let not these miscreants think that qualified punishment awaits them in another world; but have a trembling foretaste of the anguish prepared alike for each when he comes to die. But, dear Edith, this is not the subject that should occupy our age and unshackled natures. Let us rejoice we are exempted from trial, and as Josephine said, 'beware of false knights;' to which I add—false friends. Now I must turn reproof upon *ma belle*, she who feared I condemned all; did not her own affronted feelings give rise to this belief? You came to me, Edith, so governed by the excitement the vision of iniquity occasioned, that you were ready and willing to shadow o'er the earth with crime, to the exclusion of the bright lights the heavens give—the joyous moments we are permitted to have."

"To possess a friend like Mary de Winter is to own a gem that shines brightest in gloom,



relieving the mind from all perplexity," eloquently exclaimed Edith.

The young girl, in a measure, recovered her equanimity; but the shock her delicacy of sentiment had sustained never entirely wore away.

As each day of the stranger's recital was fulfilled she gathered strength, till at the close her unburdened spirit seemed to rise, fresh in health and hopes of living to be indeed her infant's mother—to be, with him, their Maker's dutiful submissive children.

She confessed herself an altered woman; she avowed to have never known the worth of religion till now; she gladly forsook the church in which she had learnt no good thing, but to which she clung, even after she had received knowledge of her husband's tenets; fondly hoping, by remaining steadfast to the faith in which she was reared and bred, to legitimize her child. She now saw the Almighty willed e'en this hope should fail, and nought remain to keep her from him to

he came in humble reliance and penitential

Leslie observed an advertisement in the of a romantic cottage to let, situated in a on the borders of a neighbouring county. He engaged it, paying the rent for one Josephine particularly soliciting that he not exceed that term, as she hoped to have er power to continue the hire ; and would assisted on returning this sum when she He, but Edith in affecting earnestness “ Won’t you allow us one claim upon your y ?”

Bourne wrote to the pastor of the little of which Josephine was to become a mem- and commended her to his guardianship, ing that she was in affliction, and without sible means of support, unless he should himself to procure a few day pupils, the of whom she was fully capable of under- . He concluded by wishing the spiritual l as temporal health of his fellow-labourer,

and praying they might meet in another and a better world, who were denied communion in this.

Her place was taken in the coach that passed every day at noon ; and dressed in unostentatious mourning, provided with ample means for her journey, and commencement of housekeeping at D——, Josephine, with her lovely infant in her arms, took a weeping farewell of the best friends she had ever known. Her pale cheek resting on her boy's head, while the coach rolled forwards, she pondered over the severe and yet wholesome lessons she had learned in the place she was quickly leaving, blessed the authors of her present comfort, nor cursed the murderer of her hopes, from the dying throes of which religion and peace had been born.

Nelly's last words fortified her breast, showing her the vantage-ground to hold, the general to obey—before whom foes, though fierce, and worldlings all, must give way. Nelly's exhortation was: "Keep your eye ever upwards, fix it

upon heaven, commend all you have or hold dear to your Father's care, and fear no man."

A bundle of black lamb's wool socks was an acceptable present for the little Alaric, who with a cake of gingerbread, (also of Nelly's manufacture) seemed very well pleased with his ride.

Leaving this interesting party journeying to their home, (a cottage the lodge to a palace in the skies) we must revert to Malvern and its inmates.

Edith and Mary had hardly returned from Rochelle, where they remained a long time, consoling Nelly for the loss of the Lady Josephine, to whom she had become quite attached, and her sweet plaything, the little Alaric. Edith had controlled her feelings during the parting scene, but now gave way to tears, as she reflected upon the unprotected condition of the delicate and beautiful Josephine, her many sorrows, her present lonely lot. Mary was saddened too, and walked to the window, desirous the smiles of nature might change her mood. Suddenly she screamed,

"Edgar Levison," cried Edith, as she discovered a young man, in the blue coat and glazed cap military undress, riding slowly towards the house, his eyes searching every window. Throwing open the glass doors, Edith bounded across the lawn to meet him. "Welcome! welcome! Captain Levison, we are all glad to see you! Here is Mary."

Edith looked beside her. Mary was not there. She glanced back at the window; Mary stood in her former position.

"Come, come, you idle girl! greet!"—— She did not like to call him Edgar, however familiarly she named his name when alone with her cousin. She blushed and stammered.

The young soldier received her greetings with manifest confusion, and with some difficulty expressed himself obliged to Miss Leslie.

Mary now joined the group, but seemed affected with the same stammering and change of colour as the soldier; she excused herself, by assuring Captain Levison he surprised them at a moment of peculiar sensibility, nay, weeping, which ~~threw~~

still evident traces of tears on Edith's cheeks confirmed.

"Then ought I to be essentially happy, in having dispelled the mist—not added to it," said the young man, recovering the equal time and tone of his voice.

Captain Levison, (giving his horse to a groom) accompanied by the cousins, approached the door, where Mr. Leslie met them.

"This is very kind of you, Levison, not to take offence at my neglectfulness. I should have written to you, but am the most absent man in the world, and always forget the very thing I ought to remember."

"My troop being under orders for joining the headquarters at Exeter, I took the liberty of dining over to pay my respects to Miss Leslie, who, I knew, must have returned home. Your personal invitation, sir, induced me to do this. I trust I have not shaken your regard through a breach of etiquette."

"Very certainly not, Levison. Your presence

is entirely acceptable to our circle. I only reproach myself for forgetting my duty, and your claim upon my esteem and attention till so late an hour. I hope from henceforth, my young friend, you will feel sensible that a soldier's word is as steadfast in peace as in war—in surety of which, I give you my hand and hearty welcome, to last until you tire of it."

"That, sir, is impossible, with the subject of so great an honour," said the young man, bowing respectfully, and cordially receiving the hand held out to him. "I must be on the march tomorrow at six, or I should feel inclined to tax your patience with my company."

Edith expressed herself as offended by this bad compliment offered to her, and told the soldier he had no business to disturb her household upon so short a notice, for so short a time; upon which Levison put on his foraging-cap, and carefully arranging the strap beneath his second lip, brought forth his pipe-clayed gloves, and

approached the bell, begging to know of the ladies, "if he should ring for his horse?"

"Come, come," returned Edith, "you are only a subaltern; I am commanding officer here. You have no business to take offence at my reprimand. Return to your duty, sir; take off that extinguisher, and make yourself as agreeable as you can while you remain at Malvern."

Levison obeyed.

"As I see you under such good discipline, I need fear no mutiny in my camp; and if you will excuse your host, Levison, there is a person on business awaiting an audience from me in another room."

Mary was the most taciturn of the party. She vainly tried to smile at Edith's playfulness, and to appear pleased with Levison's visit.

"Indeed, Captain Levison," said Edith, "I very much wish you could lengthen your stay. I have not seen poor dear papa look so cheerful for an age as the sight of a friend has occasioned. He will not ask one of his old acquaintances here,



and I fear his melancholy increases rather than diminishes. I should be very happy if others were to take pattern by you and come to stir him up. Not only have I use for you," she continued, "but amusement suitable to your taste; for this is a pretty country as well as Wales, and though the scenery is not so bold, yet we have some lovely views, some bright purling streams, a few rocky places, and *such* an enchantress, whom I wanted *so* to show you, and bring you within the sphere of her wand, to make you, if possible, better than ever you were. Allowing you to imagine what you have lost, I too must leave you for a time to order dinner, as Mary tells me banquet on sentiment may be lighter, but not yet so nutritious as animal food. I would provide both, and satiate my friends with each. This is my idea of hospitality. Au revoir!"

So saying, she departed. Levison's eyes in admiration followed her to the door.

"She's an angel! I never saw her superior!" he exclaimed.

"You never met her equal!" quickly returned Mary.

"I never did—you are right, Miss de Winter."

Captain Levison usually called her *Miss Mary*. Now the absence of her sister authorized the title the soldier used, and was most properly respectful; yet Mary did not like it from his lips; she felt suddenly thrust from his regard. She knew this ought to be if he loved her cousin rightly; yet the struggle to master her affection was great, and caused her grievous pains. She felt incapable of conversing with Levison, and looked about for an agent to her purpose. A scrap-book was examined, and shortly laid aside; he seemed likewise insensible to a volume of caricatures. At length she proposed a walk, to see some views from the grounds, which were considered amongst the finest landscapes in the neighbourhood.

The young soldier instantly started up, delighted with the proposition.

"I forget," said Mary, hesitating, "you have

"How glorious!" said Levison, regarding the prospect with a poet's as a painter's ecstasies. "What a spot for lovers!" he cried. "On one hand the last beaming gaze of the sun, reflected from his roseate pillow, richly colours and sublimely chastens the picture; on the other, the artfully arranged wreathing tanglements of the bower, where nature has sculptured her own clematis, and the blue-eyed convolvulus. Malvern, Malvern! thou hast cherished in thy bosom the beauties of creation!"

"Perfection is neither in a landscape, nor in a bower," enjoined Mary.

"Nor in a maiden's heart, you would add," interrupted Levison.

"I did not say so, whatever I may think," laughed Mary, for the first time that day. "But here," she said, gravely changing her tone, "I would have you learn an incident in the life of Malvern's mistress—a strange and a fatal incident. She told me the story in whispers; she

never comes here alone, but since my domestication at Malvern it is our favourite retreat."

Levison supported by the crooked stem of a beech, that had been trained on one side to avoid hindering the prospect, listened to her recital, whilst Mary, looking out upon the country, or into the bower, (but not once at her companion), told how upon a breathless summer evening Edith and her mamma betook themselves to this place of delightful retirement—that an unearthly voice, uttering distinct and terribly menacing words, interrupted their peacefulness, and Mrs. Leslie fainting on the spot, this was the origin of her last illness, and to which Edith ascribes her death. "Her mamma often afterwards, when alone with her daughter, declared she knew the voice. It came from her father's home. It was that of a mysterious inmate of Carrigvhair—one who had been remarkable for bringing woe upon her house. And though religion taught her to discountenance such visitations, this could not fail to make an impression upon her, whether it

was real or imaginary. Edith says she believes it real ; for her father was strangely disturbed the same evening, and Power saw something preternatural, and Meteor could not scent the track of a human foot."

"Edith is superstitious," said Levison, continuing his walk, nor heeding the start which this familiar mention of her cousin's name caused Mary. He seemed unconscious of his words till, with an emphatic effort, Mary answered, "And so am I." She became deadly pale. Levison turned towards her, and putting his arm round her waist ; "Mary, my own Mary !"

"Say no more," she cried, freeing herself, "I am not your Mary."

"No !" he said, retreating a few steps, "you don't love me then ? All my hopes are vain—my treasured joys are past."

Tears stood in his eyes.

"You love another—you whispered her name just now."

"I *admire* Edith ; I never *loved* but Mary de

Winter. Long, long ago, courage failed me to tell you so. Maddened by delay, desperation seized—I came hither to-night—I cannot live without you. Send me not from your sight for ever !”

“Edgar !” faintly screamed Mary—and they were locked in each other’s arms.

“Oh !” said Mary, as soon as sobs and tears would let her, “the agony I have suffered, the torture I have endured, is more than paid by this.”

“And I,” mourned Levison, “have been the cause of all your misery. I who could have spent my heart’s blood in her service, drop by drop, till I died for my love ! I promise while the new life she has given me lasts, to devote it wholly to my Mary.”

“And to him who will bless us both.”

“Always more thoughtful than I am ; you are right, my better part ! my angel-bride !”

Their holy and their happy sentiments of love and devotion were long and freely indulged.

Neither took account of the hours ; they passed like moments, and twilight greyed the scene—when their bliss was interrupted by Meteor, who, dashing into the bower, claimed acquaintance with the soldier ; whom Mary's presence introduced to the sagacious animal as a friend.

“ This is Meteor ! ”

“ What has he got ? ” Tied by a bit of ribbon to his collar was a note from Edith.

“ If you are deaf to the dinner-bell, I pray you be not blind to my words ; although the lateness of the hour hazards even this. Come to *substantial* fare ! Edith invites you.”

“ Laughing, blushing, each read the summons, and hastened to obey it. Mary stealing noiselessly up stairs encountered Edith coming from her dressing-room. She could not resist the impulse, and throwing her arms around, embraced her cousin, crying, “ Edith ! my own friend, I am so happy ; will you, can you rejoice with me ? ”

Edith covered her forehead and cheeks with

kisses. "To be sure I will ! Now all is right  
—I have two friends, instead of only one !"

"Then you guess my secret ?"

"I knew it long ago ; your lips whispered it  
—your blushes betrayed you."

"Then you never loved Edgar ?"

"As a brother almost I did, and now have a  
right to avow it ;" and breaking from restraint,  
the ardent girl danced round the room, clapping  
her hands in wild delight. "What a night this  
has been ! what a day ! what a joyous hour !"  
And again the cousins embraced.

"I knew Levison could not endure Emma.  
I told you so, to try and worry you into a con-  
fession ; but all would not do. You were so coy  
that I forsook the subject in despair. Edgar I  
cannot impeach of taciturnity in his affection ; he  
sought opportunity to converse with me upon  
your charms, and never seemed happy but when  
your name was in his mouth, or your form in his  
eye ; nor did he apply for your character to an  
impartial friend. You do not know half the



wicked things I told him. But come, dress, child ! the dinner will be so cold as to chill your love."

Mary shook her head.

"I put Meteor's nose upon your footsteps, and sent him, my Mercury, to warn you of the time ; indeed I meditated deferring the meal an hour, to give you leisure for understanding each other ; but I feared the night air for my pet," said Edith, patting her on the neck. "Hasten, dearest ! I want to give Levison an opportunity for explaining his situation to *one* papa, who, no doubt, will be a mediator to another papa, for the weal of a nice little pair I know."

With this, she hastily closed the door, leaving Mary to enjoy, in privacy, her unexpected fortune.

Upon Edith's entering the drawing-room, at the further end she discovered Captain Levison in converse with her papa. She listened attentively to ascertain whether she had not better retreat, but hearing they descanted on the splendid pro-

pects to be obtained from the walks, felt satisfied, and took her way to where they stood. After acknowledging Miss Leslie's presence, Captain Levison directed her attention to his dress, hoping she would excuse his regimentals.

Edith acquitted him from all anxiety on this account, and holding out her hand, it was received and warmly pressed by the young man, who, instantly comprehending the approving gesture and colouring to his temples, sought a chair for his fair hostess and best wisher.

Early that evening the lovers, who behaved with the greatest distance towards each other, were separated by Edith taking Mary's hand, and leading her from the *salle-à-manger*.

"You acquitted yourselves to admiration," said Edith, quizzing; "I am sure that Meteor, with e'en his intelligence, could not have supposed your faith plighted to each other; much less dear papa, who does not think of such things, or I, who like to see people natural, and capable of enjoying themselves."

"Your turn to be roasted, as Frederick says, will come next, my lady Edith!"

"No, *ma chère*," returned the young girl, "I have wedded Malvern and my friends, nor have room for another in my heart."

"You do not know how elastic it becomes when such warmth is applied."

"Although you may speak from experience on this subject, I am callous to impression," returned Edith. "Come! my dearest and best!" she continued, "I am ready to go over and over again with your prospects, to paint them glowing as fancy wills."

"And set aside old fate's decrees," whispered Mary.

"Even so, my love, if it were necessary; but in this instance the hag is leagued with me."

Upon a pleasing topic, one of mutual satisfaction, the gentle cousins long and earnestly descanted.

Mary explained her every shade of melancholy and belief that Edith was Edgar's preference.

Edith found reason for loving her cousin better than ever, and for rejoicing the more in her relief from all anxiety.

Levison eloquently pleaded his cause to Mr. Leslie, who cheerfully accepted, and promised to fulfil to his utmost, the part assigned him, which would be soon accomplished, as the de Winters were expected about the end of the week.

He entered into an arrangement for conveying the instant decision to the anxious lover; and speaking of Mary as a dear daughter, wished him many thousand hours of happiness in her society, filling the mind of the young man with rapturous gratitude.

Levison intimated he must now take his departure, as it was necessary to inspect his men before the march; and left the room, to bid farewell to the ladies.

Edith and Mary confessed themselves sorry to lose him so soon, but were compelled to yield to circumstances.

By some chance the lamp had not been lighted

in the hall, and Edith cried, "Go, Mary! hold the light, 'tis very dark."

She obeyed the order, nor suspected the double entendre till without the door, when straining her to his breast, a last kiss, a last look, Levison took of his Mary.

## CHAPTER IX.

y love, they are loved, that youth and maid,  
over them hangs a nameless shade.

L. E. L.

to her lover's return, Mary looked with  
anxiety for the arrival of certain members  
of her family within the precincts of Malvern.  
The day lagged at its close, and night moved  
on till, from its dark pavilion, she feared  
it would never rise. Burning hopes at one  
glance flushed her cheek, then a sensation of  
timid fearfulness chilled her frame.  
She contemplated her sister's frowning temples

and heard her grinding teeth ; and Mary shivered yet more violently when she questioned the fulfilment of these her brightest, her fairest dreams—her dearest earthly wishes.

Linked together are pleasure and pain ; both gain their intensity of feeling through the connection, whilst neither loses a particle of its distinguishing essence. There are no two sentiments of our nature so closely united, and yet so widely different in their operations. If we ascend from earth, carrying the allusion with us, heaven and the other world enforce the separate union. Set before us as monuments of the Creator's power and wisdom—the one a city of refuge from all woe, its candidates are urged forwards by the danger threatening them from without, their joy of salvation increased by reviewing the torments they have escaped ; and, oh ! how much misery must the drear and dread abode of chained spirits gain, from the perfection of bliss just beyond their reach before their lidless eyes ! Their

position relative—mighty the contrast of their eternal lives !

The season that Mary passed was a confused shine and shade. The mild and boisterous elements incompatibly strove to emulate each other—neither shunned the combat within her breast, nor refrained from showing their colours without. Salt tears washed away rosy smiles, and mirth was affrighted by sadness. She feared, she hoped ; at length she prayed for proper health of mind, and placid faith reigned superior to dimples or weeping.

The expected day arrived ; the rumble of heavy carriage wheels, slowly moving along the avenue, had a different effect upon every member of that house.

Power marched to the door with a dignified air of importance, and resting his hand on the bolt, awaited the proper signal for his ministry, as he would the word of command for unloading his ready piece.

Mrs. Hipps ran through the company-rooms,



and saw all was very right. The cook thrust the spit through a haunch of mutton, determined the preparations for dinner should proceed forthwith; while the domestics of minor importance hurried and bustled, and evinced a fidgetty alacrity in their several provinces. The pretty ones arranged their caps at a glass in the absent butler's pantry, a "nice chance," as they called it; and wondered to each other, whether the Welsh servants would speak anything "*telligible*," or were like other people to look at. Mr. Leslie folded his papers, and locking the door of his secretary, walked leisurely to the study window, in quiet contemplation of the approaching cavalcade.

Edith, who the whole of that day had been doing nothing besides looking out for the desired equipage, like a dove on wings of light flew from the casement.

Electrified, as it were, by the revolving wheels, at the vicinity of the machine, as the shocks sensibly increased, faster and faster Mary paraded the room that Edith had left, and clasping her

As each revolution tighter, the nails must have reached the palm, but the motion of the axis suddenly arrested—the carriage stopped. Her anticipatory excitement ceased, and Mary concentrated her ideas upon the greeting with which she would meet her relatives, and immediately joined her cousin in the porch, who, with radiant pleasure beaming from her eyes, and tones of animation awaited the arrivals, and bade them many welcome at Malvern.

For once in her life, Emma looked pleasantly at her cousin's beauty, while Lady Hester hoped her dear girl was well; and acting a kiss on her forehead, for the term of sixty-five seconds, held Edith in an aerial embrace—then passed on, to treat her in the same manner; but who had only experienced half her tenderness, when, "Oh, my first nephew! George Leslie!" broke from Lady Hester's lips, and she abruptly concluded her portion intended for her daughter, by pushing her aside: "Get out of my way, Mary, child!" rushing forwards, fell on Mr. Leslie's neck,

with allowable emotion, bestowing upon him the choicest and most rarefied terms of lady-like endearment—such as, “delightful creature!” “nice thing!” “my precious!” most suitable (as she believed) to a middle-aged, well-grown man, and which she culled from the younger epithets of “Sweetest, best, most charming! my pet, my own, my love!”

Frederick looked sheepish; and Edith, endeavouring to encourage him from this untoward mood, led her cousin by the hand to Mr. Leslie, who had exchanged the ringed fingers and scented burden of Lady Hester, for the rough gripe and good-humoured recognitions of Mr. Jones de Winter, and acknowledged his son with, “’Pon my word, a likely lad! worthy of being thine heir, Jones! a round age too the boy has attained, who I never saw before, and whose birth I had forgotten, but recognise for the first time to hope this will not be the last visit he pays me.”

Frederick’s spirits had considerably risen by

at time, and Mr. Leslie was much amused at her gay wit.

Emma's manner was kinder than usual towards her sister Mary, who received her condescensions with less appreciation than in days of yore. She needed rather than courted her favours, sensible of the revulsion of feeling which must take place in her sister's mind, and exhibit itself in her behaviour, the instant she should become aware who was the true object of Levison's affection.

An extra tremor shook her frame, when lighted by her sister to her chamber, Emma drew herself up to her full height, and setting her shoulders straight, so as to make a hollow apparent in her back, gazed at the carved ceilings and elegant furniture as she passed, exclaiming ever and anon: *How* think that piece of slim-cake should inherit a place! how much more *I* should become a hall! I wish that superannuated nephew of mine had had a son rather than a daughter!

I shall envy Frederick all the days of my life, I know I shall !”

After Mary had left her sister to repose, she tapped at her mamma’s door, and was presently admitted, and upon intimating she wished a few moments’ conversation alone with her mother, Lady Hester dismissed her maid, (who had been engaged arranging the most natural wig in the whole world) desiring her to complete her purpose in the morning—reclined on a *chaise longue*, and devoted her attention to Mary, who prefaced her discourse by—“ You think this a sweet spot, dear mamma ; worthy to form part of the dowry of our heroine ?”

“ ’Tis as pretty a shooting-box as Frederick could have ; I had rather, however, he should marry the heiress of Stranglely, and a house in Cavendish Square. We could have had her opera-box during the season ; and Devonshire is a climate altogether too lackadaisical to suit Emma or me long together ; and if Emma leaves me, I should like a pleasanter neighbourhood to keep up

my declining spirits than Gwyn Dinas, Malvern, or either of Levison's afford."

"Levison has been here," said Mary, suddenly taking her ground.

"Indeed!" screamed Lady Hester, springing from her lounge; "you do not say so?" she continued, grasping her daughter's hand.

"Calm yourself, dear mamma!" entreated Mary, "and I will tell you all."

"He has proposed for Edith! answer me instantly!" exclaimed Lady Hester, in a convulsive whisper, and gasping for breath.

"No," returned Mary, slowly, "he has not."

"Then I am happy—I shall rest to-night—I am thankful," continued Lady Hester, seating herself exhaustedly. "Go on, my child!"

Mary was preparing herself for the task she dreaded most of all, when Emma, peeping into the room, entered to her confusion and dismay.

"Don't let me interrupt you, Mary; if there is anything worth hearing, let's have it, and be quick, ma petite mignonne, quick, quick!" she

repeated, playing upon the table with her fingers:  
"I'll gossip as much as anybody. I heard your voices, and came to benefit by them."

"'Tis better you heard not this tale from my lips: mamma will assure you of its import to-morrow. Do retire, Emma, and believe what I say."

"Awake a woman's curiosity, put her in the way of gratifying it, and then bid her subdue the passion—this is false philosophy; I'll none of it. Proceed my Delphic priestess!"

"I cannot," said Mary, "to-night, and in your presence."

She rose to depart. Emma pulled her down again. "You'll not leave this till I am satisfied—shall she mamma?"

"Come, Mary, don't be ridiculous; I desire to have no secrets from Emma—why should you?"

"Nor do I, mother! but you should break this to her. Emma, you will regret your resolution—I have warned you."

"Does it concern me?"

"It does."

"The plot thickens. I'll stir not an inch—I'll wait my fate on the spot," she said, settling herself and composing her attention with a laughing grimace.

Mary observed her, nor could refrain a smile, which the next moment she disowned as unkind, and holding down her head, murmured: "Edgar Levison has proposed for Lady Hester's younger daughter!"

Lady Hester and Emma regarded each other for a second, when Emma, understanding the full meaning of Mary's words, fell fainting on the floor.

Mary raised her—and, weeping said, "I sought not this; I feared it would be so!"

Lady Hester was about following her elder daughter's example, and swooning in apparent earnest, when Emma recovered; and recognising Mary, screamed, covered her own eyes with both hands, and disengaging herself from Mary's



arms, uttered, in tones of intense asperity: "Begone! traitress, deceiver, snake, serpent, adder! Begone! nor let me see thee more, nor hear that foul tongue wag its lying infamy!"

Mary could bear to hear no more; the expostulations she had attempted died on her lips, and she fled the room, her ears tingling with shame for her sister's loose passion, her bosom bursting with accumulated grief. Her lonesome sorrow was interrupted by Edith's entrance, who hearing her lamentations was quick to know the cause.

She comforted, she sympathized, and promised to assist her when daylight came. She recalled Edgar's devotion, to cheer her fainting heart, told her how the "course of true love never did run smooth," and finally showed her she had a faithful friend in herself, whose greatest boast should ever be that she loved Mary de Winter, who thought her worthy a reciprocal affection.

With the earliest dawn Edith was awake, and attentively listened to every sound in the stirring house.

Presently she heard the bell-wire pass through her chamber, pulled by no sleepy hand ; she put on a wrapper, and tapped at the door from whence the vibration proceeded, which she knew to be Lady Hester's.

"Come in !" soon introduced her to her aunt's dressing-room.

"How is this, my fair niece, my hostess ! disturbed in thy sleep ! a night walker, eh ?"

"I hope you have rested well, my dear aunt," said Edith, without heeding Lady Hester's questions ; "I am interested in your health on more accounts than my own."

"Whose then ?" said her aunt.

"Mary's !" returned Edith courageously—"my dear, sweet cousin Mary."

"Talk not of her just at present, my love ! come hither, and let me kiss you !"

Edith approached.

"Don't you ever wear a night cap, or curl-papers ?"

"No," returned Edith, "I dislike the restraint."

"This is very fine talking for a young girl; restraint in little things teaches us to bear great ones in after life."

"But I never mean to be curbed," said Edith, tossing her ringlets: "I love freedom, and associate my feelings with the summer air. I'll play till winter comes on, and then in old age, I'll shake my head and think I am playing still."

Lady Hester looked out from her Valenciennes lace in extreme astonishment upon her youthful niece; she saw Edith's character in a fresh light, one she did not dream of; and weighed her wishes for and against the match with her son. She feared the loss of control over both husband and wife, and balanced her fears against her wishes. But Frederick's happiness was involved—what was to be done? She was beset with difficulties.

"Come, aunt Hester," continued Edith, "will you consider poor Mary and Edgar's case? I

came to plead for them. Be kind—be tender—unite their already betrothed hearts! Confirm their bliss by your approval!”

“My dear Edith,” replied Lady Hester, in a tone of authority, “it is not my pleasure, nor would it be proper to decide instantly upon this subject. I must consider, reflect, and arrange according to prudence and virtue.

“My daughter Emma’s feelings have been grossly outraged in this affair. If Captain Levi-son has indeed avowed a preference for the younger, instead of the elder, I confess it appears to me wiser and better to break off intercourse with him altogether, as I can hardly think him a man of honour, who to all appearances was engaged, body and soul, to Emma, and in her absence wantonly substitutes her sister in his favours. Mr. John Barrett would make a fitter husband for Mary. He is a downright honest man, and a country squire; she is a matter-of-fact, plain, homely girl, wanting no sentiment,

with neither figure, features, nor manner *particularly* imposing. If she is not obstinate, I see an excellent match for her in Mr. Barrett."

"Pardon me, Lady Hester, for differing with you," said Edith, burning with indignation; "but my fair, delicate, and feeling friend would be rather unbecomingly situated on the opposite side of Jack Barrett's punch-bowl, his coarse blue and red face staring her out of countenance, his mouth and nostrils diffusing the suffocating odour of tobacco, cigars, and toddy throughout the mansion which he has turned into nothing better than a "tom and jerry" which, by the way, is his own designation for Bettws, and the vulgar hospitable mode of inviting his friends. I early learned Edgar Levison's attachment to Mary."

"You did!"

"Yes, I was his first confidante at Gwyn Dinas. He told me he loved Mary as they grew up together; his love increased with his years, but he refrained from telling her his passion.

First, she was of too tender an age to hear his sentiments; secondly, he was apparently fortuneless till later circumstances rendered him affluent. At first he never hoped to obtain her, for he determined never to sue for her hand until he could support Mary as she deserved; and since his change of circumstances he could not find an opportunity for addressing her until he came hither. He played with Emma because Emma played with him, nor could he, without openly giving offence, extricate himself from her toils. You may think me very bold, but remember I have truth and fidelity on my side,—nor fear a mortal's frown," she would have added, but she thought Lady Hester had better be pacified than conquered by resolution.

"You are a woman, you are a mother, you must have loved. Oh, pity this your child! dependant on you for her peace—her all!"

Lady Hester's countenance, which had changed to various expressions during Edith's address, now darkened visibly. She hated being thus

sued, she revolted against a child teaching her what she should do. She drew a long breath, and then said sternly: "Edith Leslie! my niece, I pray you to retire with the answer that pre-faced your harangue. I give no other before due deliberation. I must study this case."

"Then when may I look for your decision, dear aunt," said Edith, softly.

"I stipulate neither day, nor hour," returned Lady Hester, imperatively.

"Bid me not depart without hope," said Edith, at the point of exit.

"I shan't answer you, child," returned Lady Hester, impatiently. And Edith closed the door, more sad than when she had opened it.

Seeking Mary, Edith said, she had stated her situation in all its urgency to Lady Hester, who she had left to consider it.

"Was there ever anything so provoking," exclaimed Emma, coming into her mother's room; "I have not slept all night for thinking of what I have lost. I cannot understand the

sex. Man is an enigma I have frequently tried to solve; and just as I fancy it is mine, the riddle takes another meaning. Setting aside what that prudish little minx has been at, and supposing her as pure as new milk, I must add, I don't think Edgar, after his tissue of deception, a fit husband for her."

"This is my opinion too," added Lady Hester, almost as jealous as her daughter of Mary's good fortune—for the match was not one of her fabrication, or acquired through her intrigue; and to see the hopes she had cherished for her favourite broken up and fruitless, was a subject of bitter disappointment to Lady Hester.

"Mary is false, mother, too, and deserves to be punished. We can afterwards marry her to Jack Barrett; the swain's leather purse is quite as long as the soldier's silken one. Mary has been very false; don't you remember, she even pretended Edgar was in love with Edith, to get him away from my side, and when she came here evidently made an assignation for him."



"True, my dear, most true, and most shocking to discover such a plot ! yet, most fortunate thus timely. Jack Barrett would be even a better *parti* for us than the soldier's camp ; his interest in the county may assist in returning Frederick one of these days, member of parliament—an event that I look forward to as the summit of my ambition. We will see Mary together."

Mary was accordingly sent for, and wiping away her tears, with alacrity obeyed the summons. She staggered when she beheld Emma, and bent down her eyes.

"Mary !" began Lady Hester, "I sent for you to tell you, that however insidiously you have worked to bring about this catastrophe, Emma and I forgive you. We will not dwell upon imputations you are too well aware you deserve. Let your own conscience condemn itself, and repent within."

Mary was about to interrupt her mother, but Lady Hester raised her finger. "Child ! I admonish thee to keep silence—'tis thine to obey."

Again Mary hung her head.

"Your own heart (if you have any) will tell you who I mean, when I state, a young man of family and fortune is deeply attached to you; he shall be your husband. You must, from this moment, renounce your soldier-lover!"

"Mother!" said Mary, who stood firmer now than she had ever stood on earth, "my mother, hear me! At your command I give up Edgar Levison; with this sacrifice my duty ends. I cannot perjure heart or tongue—I shall never marry another." And Mary instantly quitted the chamber.

"Let's see how long she holds this faith," sneered Emma; "we'll try her mettle."

## CHAPTER X.

I mark'd thy tears as fast they fell,  
I saw, but heard not thy farewell,  
I gave my steed the spur and rein,  
I dared not look on thee again.

L. E. L.

Emma had gained a material triumph over her sister that gave her energy to appear as early as usual at the breakfast-table. Cast over her old expression of jealous hate, she met Edith with a lurking pleasure, conscious of her cousin's suffering through her means. Edith was Mary's friend ; Edith had connived at Mary's happiness ; pale and harassed her young hostess dropped a

tear on Emma's hand, when she took it first that morning. A sardonic smile that greeted her caused Edith to crimson ; she returned the affront with a look of disgust that made Emma a greater enemy still.

Poor Mary kept her room, unable to command herself in public, who could not quench her sorrow in private. Alone—free from all restraint—she indulged her hopeless misery.

Emma whispered to her mamma that Mary "sulked ;" and Lady Hester was not slightly surprised by the solicitude Mr. Leslie evinced for her younger daughter's health.

At night, Edith went to her cousin's room, but could not trust herself to speak. She only kissed her ; then stole into her own to weep. She thought she heard footsteps on the gravel-walk, and looked from her chamber window. Beside a tall poplar, a figure stood. The moonlight lengthened out its shadow, that rivalled the tree in height.

"Is that Edith Leslie?" said the form.

"Wait for me," whispered the young girl; and taking the shortest course, in a few moments she was on the green turf beside him. They walked beneath the trees together.

At the same hour Mr. Jones, seeking his wife's apartment, seated himself upon a capacious chair confronting her, and declared himself as tired as a brewer's horse who had been carrying out the tippie all the day. "By my taste, and that's a good un," he added, "Leslie's wine is about the best I have drunk for a quarter. Crockford's and Leslie's Frederick thinks on a par, neither better than the other, both excellent in their kinds and of their kinds. These old campaigners are the men to have good cellars; yet one would think he had not a notion about the *vino veritas*; he pushed round the bottle right hospitably, but took not toll himself. This is a failing with some men, which is the cause of nothing being drunk at their tables, though they do their best in lispology to recommend the smack. It is not enough—a good host should be a great bibber,

to keep his company in heart ; however, this has no effect upon me. I pitied his weakness, and Fred. and I strove to make amends. We drank his share, besides cracking our own bottles."

"And you think I ought to have a benefit ; you desire it should be mutual, and drive me to *eau de Cologne* to keep off the fumes I detest ; for mercies' sake, Mr. Jones, go to your own room. Triste will lead you if you are ignorant of the way."

"By no means, Lady Hester, my dear, 'tis not at all necessary ; I wish Triste would get out of my presence, as I have something I am bound to tell you to-night, and which concerns my little fantail, who, by the bye, poor dove ! I have not seen to-day."

Triste was not long in obeying her master's discourteous request ; and when she had slammed the door after her, Mr. Jones again proceeded.

"Edgar, the young captain, is in love with our Mary, has kissed her, and all that sort of thing."

"I dare say you mean—proposed"—

"Aye! you are right, that explains me clearly; Leslie is bound over to keep the peace for him."

"I suppose Mr. Leslie, my nephew, is to intercede for him with us, that he may obtain her hand."

"That's it—he begs hard for their union. I assented of course, and told him I should bless them."

"How dare you without my concurrence? I object—I dissolve the engagement. I shall do it more effectually."

Lady Hester got up in a rage, and heedless of her husband's gouty toe, stumbled over it.

"Always in my way," she returned, recovering herself, and about to leave the room.

"Stop, dearest! Oh my toe!" exclaimed the husband in agony, shaking his martyr-foot, and holding his wife by the skirt.

"My love, what are you going to do?"

"To seek Mr. Leslie, and give him my fiat."

"Go," he said; "but I shall never forgive you if my pigeon droops. You women understand

each other best—I dare say you're right, though it goes against my grain to give pain. I'd rather bear it myself than Minny should suffer. She's a tender creature, and pities me sometimes. Levi-son is a fine-hearted fellow—she could not have a better husband."

"I prefer John Barrett."

"But does she prefer Jack?"

"No matter."

"He's a good fellow enough, but the girl thinks the red coat a nicerer. I know what girls feel. When I was captain of the militia how they did run after me. Faith, I think the uniform and this disabled toe (that she is determined to revenge herself upon) got me Lady Hester;" with a leer of his eye that the lady in question vouchsafed to acknowledge by looking exceedingly tractable, anxious at any compromise of her dignity to win her spouse to her opinion upon this material point.

Mr. Jones continued: "If I was a lassie, I should be just as bad. As I am for a companion,



I would chuse Jack, and if it ever comes to any thing, I'll wring his hand for him."

"I wonder you did not add—over a bin of claret."

"I thought it—but wife said it for me. No more, nor no less," said Mr. Jones, winking. "Hist," he added, again arresting her progress, "you must send for Levison yourself, see him, and dismiss him. I can't, and won't."

"And I," returned Lady Hester, "don't chuse to be scarified by a tiger in a pet. I will write him off."

"Mother, is that you?" said a scantily dressed figure, half emerging from an opposite door.

"It is I, Emma," returned Lady Hester, "what is the matter?"

"Stay a moment, while I put on my dressing-gown; I have a hideous wonder to disclose. Who's there with you?"

"Only your father."

She came trembling and shivering into her mother's room.

"My dear child! have you got the ague?" inquired Lady Hester, whilst Mr. Jones regarded his daughter with an open mouth, and eyes stretched to their utmost.

Emma's teeth chattered so inveterately for a long time, she could not speak intelligibly. "I think I have caught my death," she replied. "I have been standing close to the open window in my chamber. I have heard—and I have seen"——

"A ghost!" exclaimed Mr. Jones, closing his mouth for the first time, and looking stealthily round the room—brought his feet together, and contracted his body to the smallest possible proportions. "I am Welch," he observed, seeing his wife sneer; "I don't relish such customers. I believe in them—I do."

"Not a ghost," said Emma, recovering comparative steadiness of speech—"worse than a ghost—ten times worse. This is not a proper house. E—E—Edith is abroad at this night-hour with her paramour."

"I'll never believe it," said Mr. Jones; "she's as pure as a rainbow."

"I have seen the guilty pair."

Lady Hester's agitated exclamation was loud and violent.

"There must be some mistake," said Mr. Jones; "Edith is no flirt; once I tried to kiss her in a corner, and I'll be fried if she didn't give me cause to repent my rashness. She's a rose, but it is a sweet-briar one. He who can read may see her motto to be—touch me if you dare, though sweet temptation is her name."

"Do you think it is Frederick?" gasped Lady Hester. "If so, we'll let him alone."

"I'll answer for Fred. being stretched, and dead asleep by now; he's not the man to do discredit to his host's vintage. He rolled to his lair as heavy as a hogshead. I'll wager a trifle he'll not jingle his stilts before morning."

"It is not my brother," replied Emma; "if you come into the lobby his snores will satisfy you. I am persuaded a stranger to all but the

girl in question is her companion. What a place to send Mary to!" grieved Emma. "This is the way they have been going on, no doubt, night after night. Each had her gallant. Now we have clipt the wings of one young lady, the other is sipping her own and her friend's portion of nocturnal dew. Mary is not safe here. I foretell that she runs away—the wilful, wicked girl! What is to be done?" inquired Emma.

"Edith's father shall be informed directly; it is a duty we owe him, as our host, as well as our relative, for the girl's disgrace will involve us all."

"Conscientiousness, delicacy, virtue, imperatively call upon us to take this step," decided Lady Hester. "Come, Emma, as you are, accompany me instantly. Never mind your appearance—'tis very natural, and will show the urgency of the moment. Her father can scarcely have retired; he is late in his habits."

Leaving Mr. Jones stupefied with this intelligence, and who, unwillingly assenting to proofs,

wished fervently that they might not be caught: "Why should their innocent sport be spoiled? He was sure they meant no harm," and thus softly dreaming dozed in his chair.

With indiscriminate haste, flushed with zeal in their pious mission, Lady Hester and her daughter arrived at the entrance of Mr. Leslie's sitting-room. Intimating a desire to see their host, he came out, and carefully closing the door, led them into another apartment, where Lady Hester explained the cause for disturbing him thus unseasonably. Emma insisted that the form she had seen was that of a lover, whose mistress she had ocular demonstration was her cousin Edith.

Mr. Leslie endeavoured to dissuade her from suspicion; but the more he argued on the impossibility of his daughter permitting anything clandestine, and urged his confidence in her, the more Emma enlarged upon and magnified what she had seen, till Mr. Leslie became speechless; while Lady Hester prudently and virtuously harangued her nephew upon the absurdity, nay

indecentcy, of allowing such a questionable state of things to remain, without his endeavouring to controvert the evidences attending it.

Wrought up to an extreme pitch of excitement, Mr. Leslie begged Lady Hester and Miss de Winter to walk into his study for a few moments.

"Certainly," replied both with promptness.

He opened the door, closed it, and suddenly drawing aside a large Chinese screen that sheltered the entrance, discovered Edgar Levison stretched upon a sofa, and Edith measuring drops of *sal volatile* into a glass. Emma's confusion and discomfiture may be easier conjectured than described; and here at once Lady Hester entered into the task of dismissing Levison herself, who, she saw, had been overcome by the information he must have received from Edith; rightly conjecturing Mr. Jones's consent was invalid when she disapproved. Lady Hester waited not till the lion recovered his strength. She overmatched him now.

The long journey he had taken to satisfy himself of a decision he thought delayed—the subsequent and terrible news he heard, had weakened body and spirit to such a degree as to render the administration of a stimulant necessary, and Lady Hester's words sank like hail-stones in the o'er full pond that drowned his hopes.

A quick succession of screams woke and bewildered Mr. Jones, and induced him at length (satisfied of their situation) to hurry down stairs. The sounds guided him to Mr. Leslie's study— from whence the apparently lifeless body of Emma was borne.

“Hallo! what's this?” he exclaimed.

“You're wanting, sir,” said the domestics who officiated. “Miss de Winter has screamed herself into a fit—she'll come to by and bye.

Mr. Jones entered as he was desired. Captain Levison, absolutely haggard in his expression of countenance, leaned against the wall, supporting his side with one arm. Lady Hester was seated on a chair opposite her victim, and assailed her

husband, as he entered, with strongly compressed lips, and a look of menacing caution, that caused the timid man to retreat a pace or two.

"Come in, Mr. Jones," said Leslie, taking him by the hand.

The sound of his name only changed Levison's features to a more livid hue. He rolled upon him eyes of inanity that caused Mr. Jones to exclaim, "poor fellow ! he's ill."

Edith put a glass of water to his lips ; he drank, and reviving in a measure, fixed his eyes upon Mr. Jones, that searched his kind looks, yet evidently dreaded the change he expected.

"Be circumspect, Mr. de Winter," said Lady Hester, and her lips bled with the compression.

Leslie addressed Mr. Jones : "Your yea, or nay, will make this young man happy or miserable for life."

Mr. Jones struggled towards Levison, overpowering his wife, who attempted to keep them apart, and seizing hold of the young soldier's hand : "She is your's, my boy ! your's for ever !"



"Mine!" said Levison, with a voice that caused the glass of a lamp burning near him to vibrate to its centre.

Edith exclaimed in tearful delight, and Lady Hester was taken in strong hysterics. She kicked the gentle girl who strove to assist her, and pinched, and bit, and fought at her, like an enraged animal.

Regardless of Lady Hester's indisposition—"Let Mary be called!" uttered her father and Mr. Leslie in a breath.

"Mary!" echoed Levison.

"Not until I have given a last command," said her ladyship, breathing sanely at last, and interrupting the flight of Edith with her rigid grasp. "If my daughter Mary still prefers Mr. John Barrett of Bettws Court, she is not to be pressed further on this subject, or forced into a match uncongenial to her wishes."

"No, most certainly not, your desires shall be obeyed," replied all together, except Captain Levison, who repeated, "Mr. John Barrett! Jack

Barrett !” and vainly endeavoured to understand the reason of the mention of his name.

Edith’s light foot was no longer stayed ; she fled to fulfil her mission. Lady Hester rose from her seat ; she thought this position might awe her daughter most, and late regretted she had not assumed it upon her husband’s entrance.

“ Mr. Jones,” she said, addressing him, “ you have strangely changed your opinion since your interview with me. I devoutly pray you may not have occasion to regret your vacillation, for believe me, you were wrought upon by a scene, and influenced against your sober judgment. Before you appeared, I issued your decree, which you were only desired to confirm ; you have erased our agreement, blotted your own character, and selfishly implicated me in your disgrace.”

“ My dear, my dear !”

“ Hush ! you will tangle the web of this night inextricably.”

Mary was led into the midst by her cousin ; she dared not look up for fear of encountering her

lover's eyes, and thus lost the sense of her mother's attitude and expression.

Levison was about to place himself beside her, but was restrained by Mr. Leslie.

"Let me speak," said Lady Hester, interrupting her husband, who was going without any further ceremony to betroth his daughter to Levison.

"Mary! look at me!" commanded Lady Hester.

Mary raised her head—again her eyelids fell.

"Look at me," repeated Lady Hester.

Mary did look at her. Instantly timidity disappeared. She caught the fire that flashed from her mother's eye; she felt called upon for her own defence. Then, for the first time, Lady Hester saw a likeness to herself, and acknowledged her daughter equal woman. How different in each was the feeling that kindled such an expression! for honour impeached—innocence abused—conscientiousness affronted—Mary claimed redress.

Lady Hester, after a pause that gave Mary

ample time for fearless contemplation, proceeded :  
“ Mary ! you have corresponded with Mr. John Barrett—don’t interrupt me. I desire to inform you that there is no obstacle to your union with him. He still continues devotedly attached to you.”

Levison breathed audibly—Mary looked calmly on him, and then returned her eyes upon her mother.

“ I call upon you here, my child, to fulfil your vow to me, and to accept your lover.”

“ Madam ! ” began Mary, in a clear and audible voice, “ Mr. John Barrett never wrote to me a letter that I received. The same gentleman proposed to me at the ball at Carnaervon, to my surprise and horror. In the middle of that night—in my cousin Edith’s presence, in her chamber—I penned a formal and final refusal to Mr. Barrett. If, after such an avowal of my sentiments, he dares to mention my name in the familiar manner he once presumed, he deserves neither man’s respect, nor woman’s pity. If

you still command me, I repeat my former words—from henceforth I renounce Edgar Levison." Heedless of his groans she continued : " Here my duty ends ; I cannot perjure heart or tongue. I shall never marry another."

" If I was sure you had indeed dismissed Mr. Barrett, I might consider your situation," hesitatingly remarked her mother.

" You remember," said Edith, approaching Lady Hester, " you remember at the breakfast table at Gwyn Dinas, the day before my departure, taking (among other letters) from the bag, one in a lady's hand directed to Mr. Barrett, of Bettwa Court? You saw there had been a mistake at the office, and sent it in haste to the address indicated. That letter was Mary's; the hand-writing you must call to mind, if you reflect a moment."

" I recollect the letter now—I think it might have been her text ; but how am I to know what it contained?"

" Here is the copy," said Mr. Leslie, taking

from his desk the one Mary had made upon that eventful night. "Edith placed this document in my keeping, thinking it might assist to show her cousin's sentiments, in case they should ever be questioned with regard to Mr. Barrett, or that match should ever be proposed to her. I will read it."

At the conclusion, Levison broke through the circle, and clasped convulsively the girl he had won, and lost, and gained back thus wonderfully.

"I give my consent," said Lady Hester, sailing from the room, unwilling to witness the happiness she had so insidiously worked to frustrate.

Upon the discovery just made of the husband she had chosen for Mary, being no longer a free-will agent, she feared both daughters being left old maids upon her hands, and wisely thinking number one a lighter calculation than number two, she assented to Edgar and Mary's union, who could never understand the feeling that would have kept Mary steadfast to her word only

to yield it with her latest breath. The stern, the ruthless, the designing Lady Hester—conquered *through* the integrity of sentiment, not *by* it—feared to approach her elder daughter, justly comparing her feelings with her own, knowing that Emma would never consent to what she had been forced into; for Emma had jealousy to assist the heartless transcript of her mother's mind.

Alas! Levison was soon obliged to relinquish his Mary to attend his duty. The time engaged in the immense journey he had made from headquarters, had been robbed from food and rest. He must be in the barracks before morning dawned as he was officer of the day, which appointments rendered it necessary to be on the ground on action betimes; and Levison was a zealous soldier as well as an anxious lover. Leslie commended his alacrity, whilst he sympathized in the young man's feelings.

Promising to write to each other frequently till they should meet, and to love for ever, Edgar and Mary took a long and final embrace. Mary

sought her room, while Levison, mounted on a powerful charger, cleared rapidly the ground that lay between love and duty. Ever and anon he thought he heard the distant reveillée, and urged his good horse to greater speed.



## CHAPTER XI.

There are some moments in our fate  
 That stamp the colour of our days ;  
 As till then, life had not been felt—  
 And mine was sealed in the slight gaze  
 Which fixed my eye, and fixed my brain,  
 And bowed my heart beneath the chain.

L. R. L.

On Emma's account, while the affair was still fresh in her memory (although she did not state this her reason) Lady Hester objected to Levison's getting leave of absence ; but Mary was permitted to inform him that after the lapse of three months he would be expected at Gwyn Dinas, where the ceremony was to take place which should consummate their happiness ; upon which Edgar wrote

for his own edification, (in like manner as school-boys do) a register of the number of days, and as each expired, was careful in blotting it from the list.

A fortnight elapsed before Emma could endure her sister, encounter her cousin, or face Mr. Leslie, whom she dreaded since the night of Levison's visit. When next she met Mr. Leslie, his manners were as kind as ever; she did not dare look in his face; but if she had, the same gentlemanlike solicitude for the ease and comfort of those around him, with a constitutional melancholy, were only visible. One thing that tended materially to hasten her from her solitude was—the Willoughbys had returned from a tour of visits, and announced a grand ball to take place at the Grove. The dons of the county were expected, and they wished to take this opportunity of introducing their nephew. As the fête drew nigh, Lady Hester and Emma were curious in their surmises concerning young Mr. Willoughby, whom (it was exceedingly odd) they had

never heard of before, and marvelled whether the old gentleman intended leaving his fortune to his nephew, in which case both decided he would be a good match, and trained their thoughts accordingly.

Lady Hester ascertained that Lord Charmouth, (a club friend of her son's) would be present, whom Frederick was strictly enjoined to introduce. She beheld a coronet in a very pretty perspective. My lord's fortune was poor for a peer; but Fern Park was a comfortable as well as an ancient seat in the country, and he had a reversionary interest in a seat in the House. This was comparative wealth for a lady commoner, who had pride and assumption enough to aim at and overpower a throne.

Lady Hester revived her daughter's courage and attractions, and re-engaged herself as duenna to her lovely progeny.

Much against her inclination Mary was constrained to attend. It was her mother's policy that she should act as foil to her handsomer sister.

At Mr. Leslie's immediate consent to Lady Willoughby's request, that Edith should grace her assembly, Lady Hester accepted the chaperonage of her niece.

The day of preparation, Emma, according to her mamma's directions, lay in bed till evening, when Triste came to arrange her head, that had been wrapt in paper and lace till this late hour; when she reclined in an easy posture to prevent fatigue, nor read lest her eyes should have the least tinge of redness. Her diet was light, that her complexion might mirror the circulating fluid in all its purity and freshness. Wine, that exciter of the blood, was forbidden, and toast-and-water substituted, as an accompaniment to the sea-biscuit that formed her evening meal—the only tangible support she was allowed besides theisinglass-jelly she partook of for lunch.

Edith chose the same day for a visit to Nelly, and tripped across the common with a light-hearted zeal, that gave a glow like the pink heath to her young fair cheek. The tiny bells she

gathered for her bouquet, to the rejection of the choicest offerings of the conservatory.

"It is not the ball that make me so happy, good Nelly," she cried, "nor are your bonied words quite pleasing to me, if you think this is all my boast. No, my own Nelly! I go to the ball to please dear papa—I came here to please myself and you."

"But if the captain's lace, like his manners, are new, won't you smile to meet him? My wits can't 'tin' aye you will."

"He is not to be there; and of him I am going to speak. Mary has let me tell you all about it at last. She would not come, lest she should blush. Edgar and Mary are to be married in less than three months."

"My darling child!" exclaimed Nelly, her countenance instantly changing: "all along I thought the captain your lover; you spoke of him so sweetly and so often. This was why I asked if the master liked him, and when you told me: 'Oh, yes! indeed he does!' I felt all was right,

and waited to see him that I might bless you both."

"Well, how very odd," said Edith, "I don't know what is the reason that every one but himself and myself thought the same thing."

"Miss Mary I was sure would never marry," rejoined Nelly; "you know the fancy Prim has taken to her, and that old cat I look upon with respect."

"And you must recal to your mind, my best nurse, the sly peep Prim took at her one day after washing his face."

"I mind it," she returned, "it's a sure sign that."

Presently recovering from her disappointment, and laughing at her vain surmises, Nelly joined her child in rejoicing over Mary's prospects. "And now, my colleen dhas! before you would be for going," said Nelly, "let an old tire-woman have a wee finger in your hair."

With this she loosed its bands, and Edith's ringlets fell in profusion on her neck.

"I like you best that way ; see if your papa won't too !" continued the fond dame, surveying her darling with admiration.

"If you will have it so," rejoined Edith.

"I will—and no other," persisted Nelly. "My diamond of jewels ! you give light to my dim eyes. You may wear a russet gown with that adorning, and I'll be bound there'll not be a gem to outshine thee."

"Oh, Nelly, Nelly !" said Edith, chidingly ; "you who have taken pains to teach me that vanity is unbecoming to any features ! must the child turn to her guardian and say—she is ashamed of her ?"

"And that she'll never do—the chiefest, most sensitive vein of my old heart. Cushla ma chree ! only the aged are apt to be mazed at times, and I am no stronger than my years."

Kissing her doting nurse, Edith returned in health and innocent gladness to Malvern.

"You'll not be dressed to-night, child ! how could you have ventured out this evening ? Are

you aware the air chafes the cheeks? But you will come to be more careful when your charms are not so easily got up. For my part I rejoice to have an opportunity of nursing Emma; for in town it is not possible to get any tranquillity, much less to think of it."

"And rest is as necessary for young colts as training," said Frederick, interrupting his mamma. "By those things most bewitching! eyes, snow-lids, and tresses, you are charming, my cousin Edith. I wish, straw hat and all, you would come as you are. The tinge on thy cheeks, which painters dreaming kiss, yet waking cannot imitate—'tis divine! 'tis celestial; thy lips coral are. I would wear such ornaments for ever!"

"Flattery—I like it not," whispered Edith, quickly passing him and ascending to her room.

• Mary completed the toilette Nelly had begun, and twined her darling Edith's ringlets more gracefully.

The friends entered the drawing-room together, where Mr Leslie waited to caress his child, and



to contemplate once more what he never ceased to admire. This beloved one was wrapt in his arms, when Lady Hester, taller by reason of a black-velvet hat and feathers, chided her attitude, with: "Do you know what you are about, child! your dress is sadly tumbled; Mr. Leslie, my niece will be barely presentable; pray forbear this unseasonable display of feeling; 'twill do on the stage, where dresses are made to be rumpled."

Rebuked, father and daughter pressed each other's hands and separated. At arm's length, Emma's fingers barely touched Mr. Leslie's when they met, so fearful was she of approaching too near, lest her robe should incur a wrinkle. She looked really elegant, and Lady Hester was not a little proud of her performance.

Edith, in genuine earnestness, whispered her admiration to Mary, whilst Frederick declared he thought Emma *à-merveille*. A white ostrich feather attached by a bow of black velvet to the hair drooped on her shoulder, and shed its down

upon the rich satin dress of a pearly grey, that with some very *recherchés* ornaments, judiciously bestowed, completed her toilet.

Edith's dress—her milliner's choice—was handsome and extremely chaste—white satin, without a bow, a loop, or trimming of any description—plain as it was possible. Her exquisite form and features, confessedly nature's own, and nature's fairest work, needed no artificial aid.

Mary, original in her simplicity, arrayed in faint book muslin, attended her lovely cousin.

Frederick, who was much of a dandy, called Edith's attention to a gold embroidered waistcoat, late arrived from Lambert's, intended peculiarly to dazzle her, who, caring little for the decoration of the person, and only struck by the peculiarity of the device that showed the cuirass, playfully declared: "he seemed to have flies hanging about him, and hoped they were not of a stinging genus, or he must apply to Dr. Pomfret for relief,

who would bestow his unction and advice with many puffs."

Frederick's vanity was piqued; his carefully curled whiskers were discomposed by sundry twitches of his jaws, and a pointed imperial moved up and down to the sharpening of the wit he prepared for his fair foe, to be used when a good opportunity offered; as the noise of the wheels intended to convey his party to the general rendezvous caused an excitement in the company, that must inevitably have obscured its brightness or blunted its edge.

About half-past ten (considered generally a reasonable country ball-hour) carriages were arriving and as quickly vanished, after disposing of their gossamer freight—who at that dark watch of the night conspired to revive the day that long had waned; and foiled in their attempt to awake Sol, had recourse to the substituted light of candles, to employ as pleasantly as possible a portion of the tenor of their lives.

Within Lady Willoughby's spacious ball-room were as many various and conflicting hopes and fears as there were individuals and costumes. Here very butterflies of fashion, wealth, and beauty fluttered, displaying their spangled wings, and deceiving each other with bright looks that struggled to contradict sad truant thoughts; while some seemed all engrossed with the sensual gratification of the present moment. A few (and those the junior part) were radiant with smiles of gay inexperience.

At first the crowd—the blaze of lights—the whirling eddies of the dancers, and the strange faces that surrounded her, caused Edith to cling to Frederick's arm, with that confidence inspired by timidity—most pleasing to his vanity, and most tempting to a disclosure of his passion; but prudence checked this disposition, and forbade him risk a denial or affront, more humiliating, more detrimental to his cause, than the reproof he had excited at Gwyn Dinas. He confessed that Edith's sentiments were not yet attuned to

his, and there was danger in meddling with their accordance; he did not know how soon they might resolve themselves into sounds or signs of symphony.

Lady Willoughby was stationed a short distance within the reception-room door, to give greater facility to the approach of her company, who should seek to pay their respects to their hostess. Her eyes soon detected Edith's shrinking form, and stepping from her post, she took the young girl's hand, which pressing encouragingly, she looked tenderly in her face.

"This is quite a new scene to you, Edith Leslie!"

At the sound of her name, a young man in military costume turned short about; when presently, an exclamation of admiration caused a file of red-coats to wheel their eyes to the same point. "She's the *bella donna*, *ma foi*! how lovely! *céleste*! Fanny Herrick may hide her diminished head before this peerless nymph."

Similar and numerous were the expressions of admiration that hailed the young débutante.

Her unconscious ears imbibed not their meaning, nor attributed to herself an accidental expression of praise, but looked for the object that she might admire it too. Her eyes (as it were) for the first time opened upon the world, and cheered by Lady Willoughby's conversation and manner, she gazed around fearlessly, and with sparkling animation remarked upon the novelties discovered to her senses.

Mary looked on, in happy appreciation of Edith's entertainment, nor was there a more enraptured admirer of her beauty than the gentle cousin, who knew its depth in the soul that her image enshrined.

Lady Hester stationed herself beside Lady Willoughby, and through this position and judiciously-timed remarks discovered every one of distinction in the room, and was introduced to several; and Lord Charmouth being caught, en passant, staring at Miss Leslie, Frederick recom-

mended him to his sister Emma for a waltz, and Lady Hester had the happiness of seeing my lord's arm support her graceful daughter in the dance. This done, she was about to retire to some obscure corner to hide her niece, and give Emma some trouble to find her chaperone, (who would thus need the nobleman's attendance and attention for a prolonged period) when the aforesaid officer coming forward, begged Lady Willoughby to recommend him to Miss Leslie.

"Miss Leslie, Colonel Ashley desires the honour of your acquaintance."

Edith curtsied.

"Captain Levison is pretty well known to you, if I am not very much mistaken, Miss Leslie," said the soldier, endeavouring to improve the introduction by mentioning a mutual friend.

"He is," returned Edith, slightly blushing. She felt for her cousin Mary, who stood close beside her.

"I could not get him from his quarters to-night; he declared he had a bad ankle and a

bad instep; and I declare if I won't roast him upon being a bad chevalier to his lady patroness."

"Are these then," inquired Edith smiling, "common faults of his? Is he addicted to general lameness?"

"The moral or the physical you would have me decide which is the most habitual with him. The one I must not question, or he might call me out; the other I believe to be as much assumed, as that of those little birds, who will limp, and cry, and flutter, to decoy you from their nests."

"You are a student of nature, I perceive," said Frederick, endeavouring to bring the conversation to a close.

"I am," returned Ashley, "and therefore decide Levison has some reason for his absence, as certainly as I have for my presence at this fête. I cannot understand the boy of late; he walks with his eyes in the clouds; he wears an umbrella, but never dreams of its use when a storm approaches. Often I have caught him



standing under a tree for shelter; and taking occasion to extol the quality he possesses in an equally strong degree with the carrier-pigeon, and quite as much benefit to himself. I have possessed myself of the whalebone, and elevated it for protection more advantageous than the Aqueous Insurance Office could offer. He writes a great deal, and this I take to be a proof of mental derangement."

"An umbrella and a soldier in the same place!" said Edith, endeavouring to change the conversation; "I thought sailors and soldiers were not permitted to wear one."

"Levison is an exception to the general rule; he has adopted it very recently. A mackintosh used to be sufficient, but I fancy he finds an umbrella more companionable, and something to engage his fingers—as his tailor's bill came rather expensive."

"How? why?"

"To my certain knowledge, he has had three sets of new buttons within the last month;

however let him rest in peace," said the soldier pausing; "will Miss Leslie confer on me the obligation of her hand for the dance?"

Edith turned to Frederick, who said she was engaged to him, and leading her away, they had barely time to exchange the briefest civilities, when she was hurried into the midst of the light and excitement.

"Remember," enjoined Lady Hester to her niece, "if that young man comes up to you again, child! that you introduce him to me;" and Lady Hester and her son whispered together.

As they passed through the throng, way was made for them. On each side glasses were raised, and "how beautiful! charming! lovely! divine! adorable!" echoed from rank to rank; and "who is she? from whence?" &c. &c., were the expressions that met our heroine where'er she turned.

Lady Willoughby was assailed by questions from all ages and sexes indiscriminately, of, "who was the beauty! the light of her room!

the admiration of every one? why did she not dance?" &c. &c.

Frederick asked Edith to fulfil her promise, and enter the lists with him. She said "she would, if he very much desired it, but dancing would only beat her, and there was a great deal yet to amuse in quiet contemplation for such a novice as herself."

Strange to say, Frederick accepted her apology; but giving her to understand that, as she was engaged to him, with him only she should dance—he left her to the care of Lady Hester, and sought the second beauty, Fanny Herrick.

Emma, in an hysterical mode, came up; and laughing and sighing in the same breath, while she hung in a dependant manner on the arm of Lord Charmouth, declared, vowed, and protested, she was fully persuaded she had lost her dear mamma, or that her dear mamma had lost her. She scented her bouquet, while Lady Hester asked, "what could they have been about?"

"No less than two quadrilles and a valse we

have perpetrated together," said Lord Charmouth, all the time keeping his eyes fixed on Edith, who lowered her's to evade the gaze.

"Really, I don't know how to forgive you," said Lady Hester reproachfully, "and feeling her daughter's forehead with her hand; "sit here beside me, my love, and rest awhile. I think seriously of not allowing you to dance again to-night. Lord Charmouth! Emma is very delicate."

"Indeed—I am concerned for being the author of her indisposition," rejoined the young man, apparently touched at the languishing attitude of the *élégante*.

"Allow me to mention my sister," said Emma, taking alarm at the admiring attention the nobleman bestowed upon her cousin. Lord Charmouth, professing he was engaged "three deep already, but soon as he had accomplished this Cerberus task, he should return to the point of attraction"—left the party.

"What a vulgar man," said Edith, when he was gone.

"What want of taste!" exclaimed Emma, "he is delightful!"

"He has a bold, rude stare," returned Edith.

"Oh, that's only because he saw you were a *parvenue*; if you had gone out more, you would be *au fait* at such expressions. If you observe, he does not look at others in the same manner. He asked me if you were not a novelty. I told him the truth."

"What truth?" interrupted Mary, piqued with her sister's want of candour.

"Why, that Edith was, as it were, a child—not having seen anything of life."

"You need not enlarge upon what you said," returned Mary, with an air of censure.

Mary had never before implied a reproof, and Emma was indignant beyond measure, but feared to show it, as she saw Mary must soon ride in her own carriage, and would have many things to bestow, the loss of which Emma did not like to hazard.

Frederick rejoined the maternal circle, speaking

extravagantly upon the charms of Fanny Herrick the belle, nor pretended to allow her deposition, that every one besides avowed absolute, in Miss Leslie's presence. He called upon his mamma and Emma to stand up, as he wished to point out a few of the distinguished in the room, by this manœuvre rasing a living wall before his lovely cousin, who was the object of admiration to the whole assembly; and more especially to thwart Colonel Ashley, who was viewing her over the shoulder of a brother-officer.

Colonel Ashley became the subject of conversation, and notifying where he stood to Emma, and giving a chart of his features, that she might recognise him in the crowd, Lady Hester enlarged upon his family and fortune, explained how he was the colonel of Edgar's regiment, extremely young for a field-officer, but his amazing interest, and equally immense wealth, had procured him this elevation above the heads of his fellows—that in point of money, there did not appear a

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more desirable match in the room. Lord Chmouth was decidedly inferior, as Ashley was heir to a peerage of ancient patent; and you Willoughby (whom they had refrained from mentioning before his relatives, lest his aunt should perceive their anxiety to know him) Willoughby would be quite a secondary consideration before this young soldier.

Frederick told his mother he had endeavored in vain to get introduced to the colonel, with the view of taking that necessity out of Edith's hands, who, he thought it politic, should have as little to do with him as possible; for scarlet and gold lace made often serious impressions upon young ladies, and the soldier was decidedly taken with his cousin; for since they had met, he had not danced a step, though much sought after, and considered the chief *lion* in the room; he prowled about first in this corner, then in that, yet never lost sight of his innamorata; Frederick had been closely watching him, and understood all his manœuvres.

There were many people present whom Lady Hester had met in London, with the politics of whose families she was thoroughly conversant; but excepting a few passing remarks to passing friends and acquaintances, she stirred not from her post, preferring to form an opaque shield to her niece's attractions, who chatted with Mary, when she could no longer see before her.

The game to lady Hester's taste were the three young men above cited; and as Mary was already provided for, she sought no lesser fry.

"Frederick!" cried Emma suddenly, "do tell me who that young man is—that—that!" she exclaimed, endeavouring to point him out from the throng. "He has just entered the room—now he is speaking to Lady Willoughby at the further end. Can that be young Willoughby? he is divinely handsome."

"My dear Emma," said Lady Hester with anxiety, "pray do not be so earnest—it is very vulgar—do you see Colonel Ashley drawing near? he is in company with our friend Cavendish, a



outre to be  
stiff, my love!

Lady Hester  
companions in  
their spurs a  
progress of ca  
had drilled her  
certain persons  
with an appa  
which, she thou  
ingly the recep  
could be main  
congeal the adv

"How do you  
soldier.

"Oh! it is M  
to see you," re  
surprised pleasur

through, with every member of the advanced guard, Mr. Cavendish begged to introduce his friend Colonel Ashley to Miss Leslie's chaperone; and Colonel Ashley, when sufficiently established in Lady Hester's consideration, requested to know whether her niece was still engaged. Lady Hester told him he must submit to the disappointment; she had not fulfilled her contract with Frederick, which she deferred on account of the fatigue she experienced from dancing, being unaccustomed to the exercise.

"Where did you spring up from, Cavendish?" said Frederick, who enjoyed the colonel's discomfiture.

"With the crop you see here, crammed inside and aloft. Our fellows nearly broke down Ashley's drag. We came with six cattle, and killed the two wheelers."

"Quite?"

"Not quite; we left them on the road—tender dog's meat; 'tis well Ashley has a purse; he swore 'twas a famous excuse for getting a brace of new bloods."

"What a monster!" thought Edith, who heard this boast.

"Another Alaric Elphinstone," whispered Mary. "I told you he was not an isolated instance of human depravity; I contend that a man who could, without compunction, abuse to death such useful and generous animals, had taken his degree in cruelty."

Mr. Cavendish shortly left the group, to make his observations in another quarter.

Lady Hester asked Mary for her fan, and when her daughter got up to attend her mother, Frederick, placing his foot on her vacant seat, and standing before Edith, monopolized her society. A squeeze of the wrist detained Mary at Lady Hester's side, and Emma looked her most seducing.

Colonel Ashley, once within the pale of Lady Hester's chaperonical sway, found it impossible to make an honourable retreat; but being hurt by the premeditated refusal of Miss Leslie's hand, he was too indignantly proud to suffer her

triumphant aunt, (by soporiferously trancing his vivid senses) ingeniously to play either of her daughters upon him, for that or any other dance; so resorting to conversation, as a foundering ship to her minute guns—his last resource—he respectfully kept at bay the most talented inuendoes of this clever person, and gracefully foiled her maternally aspiring designs.

It was not till Lady Hester had exhausted her most select artillery, she had the mortification to perceive that every charge fell guiltless of impression on the mailed conduct of her soldier friend, who maintained the same calm, sleek nonchalance, which eventually inscribed him upon her tablet “as the model for a marble monkey—her notion of a soulless man, and the most blissful personification of a coxcomb! a mere *Sippus*, as Miss Macklin would term the creature.”

Lady Hester had nearly wearied herself out, when Lieutenant V—— came up, and took Colonel Ashley's arm (à la mode militaire,) saying: “I have discovered you at last; a pretty

foraging I have had. Come, there is a congress of our fellows at the other side of the room, who want you to give your opinion in a most interesting argument upon ankles and petticoats."

Here the debonnaire looked round upon the ladies, and turning with subdued *bravurage*, whispered to the colonel: "They seem to think me confoundedly rude; were you one of their coterie?"

"Yes," replied Ashley, in the same low tone; "a lion, beset with toils, and very grateful to his comrade's sword for cutting, though bluntly, the tangled meshes."

"Hah! that's it," returned V——; "but I was never more than introduced to Lady Hester, nor has she thought fit to elevate me to a higher distinction than a bowing acquaintance."

"No consequence, my dear fellow, we march in a fortnight; all they can say is, you are deucedly impudent."

Having made their obeisance, the brother-officers retired together, leaving Lady Hester in

undisputed possession of both daughters, with an open field to exercise their airs and graces, for the attraction of more civilized mellow natures than those which she supposed lined a scarlet vest.

"I could not have conceived Colonel Ashley was such an ill-bred *insipide*; he bored me beyond ideas with that ball, and this concert, ugly Miss this body, and pretty lady so-and-so, who was in greatest force at Almack's, on the stage, or in the opera. I vow he can't comprehend more. To tease one with an interminable catalogue of beauties and frights is the most abominable propensity ever known. Then to look at the tinsel *militaire*, from whose egotistical opinion of the qualities of other individuals, you would suppose was a perfect Adonis! On the contrary, he's only just passable—not a whit more. To sum up the measure of his brainlessness, could there be anything more glaringly *outré* than quietly to stand *vis-à-vis* of my two girls? not even possessing the common civility to ask either of them to

dance. Without exception, he is the most extraordinary compound of nonsense, impudence, and want of courtesy that ever entered a ball-room."

Having thus completed her tirade upon the demerits of Colonel A., the highly incensed Lady Hester, bodily discomposed, took Emma's hand, and putting it to her own forehead, which was burning from the passionate effort she had made, said : "There Emma! you feel, with a gloved hand, the pain I suffer for the welfare of my children ; if it was not that I am continually endeavouring to settle you in a fashionable and happy sphere of life, I should think nothing of Colonel Ashley's conduct ; but in my situation, with two girls whom I wish to have thought well, and spoken well of, 'twas truly distressing to be treated with disrespect by that soldier puppy, in view of half the room. Picture to yourselves my chagrin, the poignancy of a mother's feelings, when I looked round, you were the only girls not dancing ! To add to this I have the mortification to believe

that scamp, Lord Charmouth, has played me a trick; at least six dances have taken place, and he has not come to fulfil his promise. Ah, me! I am a most unfortunate woman!"

All this was delivered in a true ball whisper, though enacted in a tragic manner.

"Forgive me, my parent, for presuming to correct your supposition," said Mary, "and credit me when I tell you no fewer than five young ladies, our near neighbours, were just now in the same dilemma in which you fancied us singular. Perhaps Lord Charmouth is at this moment seeking our party; remember how hard it is to distinguish an acquaintance in such a crowd. Be pacified, dear mamma! lean on my shoulder, it will be honoured by your weight; you do not often condescend to me."

Mary's tender assurance had the charm of soon tranquillizing her parent's irritation. It is surprising how gentleness conquers our most stubborn passions. In Lady Hester's family Mary was the only one who understood the road to



soften those exploding effusions of weak human nature. Possessing a heart, the delicacy of whose texture received the faintest idea of pain with the most vivid impression—in a moment she thought, she felt, and was wounded with the sufferer; so refined was this tenderness that the affairs of others imperceptibly wound; and with parasitical tenacity, sapped the same vital part that lay like an inestimable treasure in what, to the eyes of the world, appeared mere common-place soil; it required the eyes of the mind to discover, to analyze, and to value. There were seasons when her native piquante eloquence soothed a sick couch, and cast a halo round the fireside.

“Well, my little girl!” said Lady Hester, “I would embrace you if I dared. What will Minny have me to do? for I am quite *hors de moi*; my head is wild—indeed I can scarcely control my expressions.”

This unusual kindness of her mother created an indescribable sensation of happiness in Mary's every pulse; her formerly pale cheeks now glowed

with delighted excitement, and her voice was almost inaudible, for gratitude smothered every effort to articulate. At length she forced it from its inmost cell, saying in a fervent whisper: "My own dearest mamma, I will accompany you home this moment—now—" and tears fell from her beaming eyes. .

"My dear Mary," said Lady Hester, "one would imagine you saw me dying. Indeed, love! you must restrain yourself. In a room consecrated to Bacchanalian fêtes, such weakness is sacrilege."

"Come, sister! do not be ridiculous," added Emma, tartly; "your affectation upsets mamma, and will be the laugh of the whole community."

"Softly, Emma," interrupted Lady Hester, "how can you be so unkind. Remember your sister's indefatigable, uncomplaining attention when you were laid up with influenza, and believe me, few could bear what she endured from one of the most peevish beings that ever lived."

This merited reproof completely silenced Emma, whose ill-natured jealousy of her sister had prompted her to attempt severing the affectionate link fortune seemed so propitiously to have wrought, between the often-slighted Mary and her now captivated mother.

"Thank you, mamma, for considering me," said the delicate girl; "but I did not think my services to Emma worthy of so flattering a reward. Besides the long time that has elapsed since then caused me to forget Emma's illness.

Frederick is going to take Edith to the supper room; he will find papa and send him to convoy us. You must take an ice and negus; this will quite establish you in your former spirits, without adopting the plan I originally proposed."

Frederick, with his lovely partner, presently appeared, and declared himself ready to conduct his mamma, as Mr. Jones was particularly engaged diving into a monstrous pasty, from which it would be dislocation to separate him. He could not catch a game goose for his purpose,

who was not already skewered with a young lady *liver*, or a dowager gizzard ; he had met, on his return, many dames, like Diogenes, looking for a man."

Lady Hester's colour rose and subsided ; she placed her hand upon her heart—it palpitated. To be handed to a supper-room by her son was proper enough.

Who should conduct Emma ? What a humiliation ! to appear in such a place without a beau ! yet she must go, or she might faint ; and Emma needed something to keep up her good looks. She was resolved. "Take your elder sister," said Lady Hester to Frederick ; "I will follow with Mary. Get Emma a good place at the table, in a conspicuous situation if possible ; and don't put yourself forward : in the press it will be supposed she has a chevalier in waiting. If an utter stranger offers to assist her, let him ; 'tis better than that you should be seen at her elbow."

A little to the right of our party as they stood,

sat an elderly lady, who had maintained the same position that entire evening ; and whom, from observation, Lady Hester perceived to be possessed of three daughters and no sons ; the daughters danced incessantly, but their partners were second-rate. These girls had now departed with the multitude to the supper-room. To this lady she addressed herself, hoping she would take care of her niece till her return."

"I am sure I shall be most happy," promptly returned the person in question, who had long admired Edith, and wished to know her better.

"Come sit by me, Miss A—a—"

"Miss Leslie," said Lady Hester.

"I am proud of your acquaintance, my dear young madam. How is it you have not danced to-night?"

"Mary, my child, my love, lead me, help me! I can hardly see," said Lady Hester, leaning on her daughter. This was Mary, whom she had neglected, slighted, and persecuted—Mary, who her mother confessed had never received the same

attention as her other children ; yet while she heeded their general indifference to her feelings, the essence of this child's purity of sentiment ascended in perfumed odours, whose penetrating sublimity almost intoxicated her languid senses.

When it seizes the most vigorous, sickness, as it were, decomposes their component parts ; and reduces them to that primeval insignificance which ranks the noble and the peasant in the great strata of mortality. The proudest spirits bend with osier meekness, and learn from that pale chemist what health perhaps could never make them feel. This gives sympathy to the heartless, and mellows the stubborn will ; for a time, at least, it alters the mental qualities, as visibly as the physical properties of our nature. Lady Hester's mind was in a state of fusion ; all her ideas of partiality, and adulatory homage at the shrine of beauty, evaporated, leaving the less volatile and more dense particles of affection unalloyed in the crucible of maternal love. She yielded her whole soul to Mary, who appeared

inspired with a thousand graces, and seemed to soar in the element that wafts balm to the suffering, as she conducted her faint mother in beautifully filial triumph from the busier scene of gaiety.

Lady Hester's manner had taught Edith never to question her motives, but gently to submit to her orders.

Edith placed herself, as desired, by the lady of her aunt's selection ; she was fortunate, however, in her companion, and bereft suddenly of her relatives, sought comfort in this friendly face. Her adopted chaperone was a homely good-natured individual, whose character will be better defined by entitling her—a motherly woman, the honour of which appellation she appeared to deserve in every sense of the word. Happily satisfied with herself in all things, she never waited for Edith to answer a single question, thus running on : " My Lady Willoughby is a charming woman ! This is a splendid room ! A pretty country, don't you think so ? We are quite new

people in these parts; however, my girls have managed to scrape acquaintance with the military; young eyes do these things cleverly; their father was a soldier—an Indian officer—served in the Burmese war. Poor dear Captain Childe, my husband, got a marsh fever that killed him. It's not a great while back; but I came home with the girls for my health, and had not seen him for ten years before. He was a good man, my poor dear!" The widow sighed, and groaned, and proceeded: "This is a snug situation, ours, my love! all out of the bustle. I sit here like an old time-piece in a watch-pocket; the girls know where to find me, and that's enough. The best view of this room is taken from the looking-glass behind us; the girls told me the reflection from it to the opposite one was monstrous fine."

Edith enjoyed the prospect to which she was directed, and her ingenious remarks were the source of great amusement to the aforesaid Mrs. Captain Childe, as carried in full on her embossed cards, which refinement was maliciously



conjectured to harmonize with her highly embossed person.

By degrees the part of the room occupied by Edith and her friend had become very thinly peopled ; the crowd being greatest at the exit to and from the supper-room, whither the hour seemed to guide many.

There was dancing at the further end, and Edith was delighted with the multiplication of saloons and dancing rings presented to her view. Pairs and doors were countless, and lights and brilliancy dazzled. Had she a vision ? Was it real ? or this enchantment ? Edith became pale ; she rose—a face and form was mirrored there, that she remembered well. The figure moved ; she turned from the reflection to the opposite wall, but nowhere did the same appear. Again she dwelt upon the glass ; here, the second time in their lives they met ! Instantly he caught her pallor. Real or unreal, she examined each living face in its living lineaments, and turned from the glazed marble. In the distance, leaning against

the wainscoting, she perceived a young man, his hand pressed against his forehead, apparently gathering thought. Now he gazed on the mirror behind her. Edith blushed crimson, her lips trembled, she confessed it was *he*. The stranger was evidently discomposed by this last survey; and, as she had done, he reverted to the breathing mass; but with an expression of supernatural belief, his eyes strayed from one to the other of the few individuals in her vicinity. At length, the heroine of the moor and the wounded huntsman confronted each other! Oh, the joy of that recognition! his features could not contain half what he felt, or his chest suppress its heaving, while Edith changed colour each waning second. Quick as the arrow to its aim, he was beside her. "Edith Leslie!" he murmured, and as a spell admiration and transport rendered him dumb.

Modesty, and it may be a newly-awakened sentiment, kept our heroine for a moment silent. Smiling, she addressed him, speaking the first, "You have not then forgotten your obligation to me?"

"I shall see and feel it here as long as I live," he exclaimed, in a tone of enthusiasm, removing his jetty curls, and displaying the scar. "My aunt, Lady Willoughby, was right—I could not find your superior—the belle she promised to present to me. Your name she withheld; had I known it, this moment had not been deferred. Are you alone?" he asked, regarding earnestly the neighbouring faces.

"Not quite," returned Edith, "my chaperone is gone to the supper-room, and I wait her here."

"Presuming thus far, do I ask too much in begging your acceptance of my arm for a saunter in the conservatory. Miss Leslie will greatly honour and oblige her respectful admirer. To ask you to dance would be to take us both into the crowd, and fatigue you with the heat."

"I may not dance," said Edith, "while I am engaged to another."

"How? another!" abruptly inquired the young man.

"Yes, indeed," said Edith innocently, "my

“ Frederick de Winter engaged my hand, I have not fulfilled the dance with him; now I must, before I can comply with your wish.”

“ Happily this rule of etiquette does not debar the promenade,” said the young man, greatly relieved; and they were lost in the multitude.

The conservatory was decorated with coloured lights, that, festooned among the shrubs, gave a mellow light to the scene.

The refreshing and fragrant air fanned Edith’s face, as she entered with her companion, and revived the excitement both had experienced. Among the few couples that lingered in this delightful retreat, and dallied amidst the flowers, Edith discovered her cousin Emma with Lord North standing together in a remote corner. She hung her head near a drooping passion flower; while he seemed to be whispering in her ears words that caused neither sigh nor smile, but only a down-cast looks of more meaning still,

Emma and her chevalier appeared deaf and blind to surrounding objects; nor did Edith seek to recognise her cousin, but avoided the portion of the building thus occupied. Our heroine admired the health, beauty, and variety of the surrounding plants, and the taste displayed in their arrangement, when her companion, who had long been regarding her bouquet with a curious eye, remarked: "Your collection is the sweetest I have perceived to-night. May I ask, Miss Leslie, who arranged it?"

"On Lodon Common I culled the same," said Edith.

"Do let me examine the blossom on which I bled."

Edith handed the bouquet.

"Hallo! my boy," shouted Sir Leonard Willoughby, coming suddenly behind him, and slapping his nephew on the back. "I see you have made good use of your time, although but half an hour in the house. Hardly alighted from the coach before you leap into a lady's favour!

My dear Miss Leslie, I think it right to inform you, I heard Lady Hester seeking for her niece and her equipage."

To the hall they instantly repaired, and arrived just as Lady Hester had stepped into her carriage.

"Good gracious, child ! what trouble you have given me to find you. Frederick is yet looking for you, half out of his mind by this time. Get in directly ; I am ill, and want to be at home."

This was even more gently spoken than it might have been, had not Lady Hester perceived the handsome young man who attended her niece.

Handing her to the coach, he dwelt on the steps, to know whether he might pay his respects at her house in the morning, "as he had something he wished to return Miss Leslie."

"Certainly," said Edith, "papa will be delighted to see you, and Lady Willoughby can show you the way. She knows Malvern well."

"What a beautiful young man that is ! So

Edith you contrived to get hold of the Willoughby," said Emma.

"He came up to me," returned Edith.

"He knew you before then?" said Lady Hester, "and you never told us."

"I did not know his name," replied Edith colouring; "I was not aware he was Sir Leonard's nephew. We met nearly two years ago. A strange story it is; but I must not tell you," she laughingly rejoined; nor could be prevailed upon to break her word, though inuendoes were thrown out, unpleasing to her ingenuousness. She was quizzed and teased extremely. Edith leaned back in the carriage, happy in herself, and silent towards her relatives. Upon her arrival at home, she wondered ten miles should so soon be compassed.

Lady Hester usually retired early from balls, conscious that the less a belle was seen, after she had made an impression, the more favourable to her cause; and that if a girl had acquired no

iration during, what she considered, a reasonable period, it was time to withdraw, lest, being often before the world, or too long at one time, it create aversion. Our chaperone seriously objected to a young lady dancing frequently during the same evening; unless there was a constant run of good partners, as the fatigue, and consequent heat, tended to spoil the complexion. Added to these—her calendar opinions—Lady Er was attacked with spasms in the region of the heart, occasioned by the violence of temper to which she was in the habit of giving way, and finally brought on by a series of disappointments to her will that she had met with in her life. These combined circumstances rendered imperative she should timely quit the festive ball.

When the friends found their chamber, Mary was installed full confidante of the meeting, and observed that manly beauty had never affected her before—neither manner nor word of mouth had made an impression till the night in question.



A few hours after the departure of Lady Hester and her party, when the moon became glazed with the hazy mantle of dawn, and the sentinel-stars from their night-watch withdrew ; then, and not till then, did the little world of pleasure dissolve with one consent, to shun in sleep the tediousness of Sol's toilet, nor to awake till his peerless fingers had gilded nature, and his fiery nostrils breathed warmth around.

## CHAPTER XII.

Farewell!—we shall never meet again  
As we are parting now!

The following morning, Edith was awake with the first note of the earliest bird. It opened—a day of anticipation intensely interesting. She longed ardently yet impatiently for the visiting hour.

Notwithstanding her indisposition, Lady Hester, in elegant morning toilette, appeared in the drawing-room shortly after breakfast. Emma, a few minutes later entered the same apartment, her hair and dress arranged according to Triste's most

studied negligé. She reclined upon the sofa, as becoming her air and costume.

Mary, ever near her cousin, disentangled the silks for her embroidery. Mr. Leslie read a little of politics from the paper, while Mr. Jones still slept, and Frederick was no where to be found.

Lady Hester in whispers informed Emma, she was sure that satisfied of Edith's apprehension and safe custody, he had staid to the last of the ball, and was over-tipsy to send home. Edith's feelings were strangely disturbed by a ring at the bell. Presently the servant ushered in a gentleman, whom he announced as *Mr. Alaric Elphinstone*.

Edith had risen at his approach—instantly her countenance changed, she staggered, and must have fallen, but Mary, quick to understand her distress, caught her arm, exclaiming, “you had nigh tripped, my love! I fear I was in your way.”

Edith offered not her hand to the visitor, but curtsied in silence to his repeated bows and polite inquiries.

His card was laid on the table beside her ; with trembling fingers she took the fatal paper, and read that name she had learned to execrate.

A few moments after his entrance, Edith, unable to support the presence of one so abhorred, and yet so singularly wound up in her thoughts, left the room, and (as she hoped,) his sight for ever. She flung herself on her knees at her bedside, and in sobbing prayer declared her weakness and her misery !





## NOTES TO VOL. II.

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### A.

*ck-crystal*."—There are frequent veins of crystal in the mines of Wales; occasionally spar of sublimity, and gem-tinged, is obtained.

### B.

*e head of a celebrated martyr*."—The town of becoming miraculously possessed of the head of the Baptist, devotion suggested the erection of a shrine for the sacred relic, and to this zeal the church of Notre Dame owes its rise.

### C.

*ndles thus consecrated*."—It is a common practice at Roman Catholics in cases of menacing calamity, early that of disease, or during popular disturbance, at wax tapers, which, so long as they burn, the is supposed to intercede for the safety of her pper.

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**EDITH LESLIE.**  
**VOL III.**

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**EDITH LESLIE.**

**A NOVEL.**

**IN THREE VOLUMES.**

**VOL. III.**

**LONDON:**  
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**1844.**





# EDITH LESLIE

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## CHAPTER I.

I move on fortune's rapid wheel : my lot  
For ever changing like the changeful moon.  
PLUTARCH'S LIVES.

What an indefatigable sprite is time—always  
dithily plying his consuming wheel. With  
Jernaut's wooden face, the unrelenting in-  
able views martyred moments annihilated  
eath his whirling spokes. A month is but a  
asit, whose days, like rainbow-tints, are coloured  
ionally, and change with imperceptible rapidity  
then drop a little bead from the rosary of life,  
uch falls unnoticed and irrecoverable into the

abyss of ages! Two had vanished, and the third wavered on the brink; that auspicious season was at hand, which should witness the coronation of Edgar Levison's brightest hopes, and dissipation of his lightest fears.

On the morning of the last six days, from a window in his chambers, the lover looked wistfully, although a dense fog shrouded persons and things otherwise within his survey. He gazed, and saw not—he listened for a sound more cheering to him than the song of birds, dash of waters, or murmuring of the summer air among the leafy trees! He sought to distinguish the postman's knock from the tumult of a London thoroughfare. Each sound was dulled, as it voyaged through the heavy atmosphere to his throbbing ears. Still he heard not the one that to him should cleave the gloom, and bid daylight, mild and warm, shine into his soul from the page his Mary had signed. The fog, unreasonable and severe, presaged rain. Edgar paced the room, stopping every moment to hearken. Mary

was not very well when she last wrote, and this appeared an age. He had looked in vain for weeks; he had written, conjuring her to pity him. Should this one of cloud and mystery add another to his torment? He prayed the fog might turn to heat, and the wished-for noise answered his breath.

Hardly waiting till the exit of his servant, Levison snatched up a letter: he trembled ere he broke the seal—it was in Mary's hand, (who could doubt it?) but most strangely altered. Not the firm yet delicate lines she usually traced; disjointed words and mis-shapen letters filled the address. "Very ill, or changed!" he murmured. "No—no—neither!" instantly rebuking himself, "thou faint heart!" With eyes that dilated as they perused the contents, he read.

"Edgar Levison! I presume to call you so for the last time—'tis a sweet, though painful consolation; yet have I strength and resignation sufficient to name misfortune—my sister become, and kiss her withering form. I release you from

your compact—one formed in the heat of affection, when disease had not impaired its vigour. I cannot be your wife. I must die. Mary de Winter. The small-pox has visited her, and disfigured her features with your love, and disfigured features that were never fair. I am most unlike what you once knew me; forget me, and wed beauty and wealth. You can—in justice to yourself, you ought; and hearkening to most friendly counsel you will. I have no more than a heart and tongue left to bless you always. Farewell.”

“Incomparable Mary! generous girl! dearer than ever, and never mine! none can tear me from me!” exclaimed the youth.

Desperation bled his cheeks and temples. “My poor Mary,” he faintly ejaculated, and threw a chair. “I will to Gwyn Dinas directly, I will see my betrothed and comfort her. Soon shall she see me, and hope and health return. Fare you well!”

Thus encouraging himself, Levison at intervals of anxiety flushed his cheek, but he

no power over his motions, and sank more heavily back after each effort he made to rise. A temporary paralysis seemed to have seized upon his limbs, and in bitterness of thought he soliloquized. "Thou hast thy revenge, most frigid lady! my mother-in-law! a wife's beauty spoiled for which her husband groans—thy triumph is complete—thine enemy must of necessity crawl before thee. His pride no more. I would not—I could not—I dare not impugn providence in this affliction; yet is it a grievous trial of human patience, to witness the unwise (I had nigh said wicked) plough over the guileless and gentle, with the sharp share of derision. Human nature is filled with astonishment and awe, when contemplating the vulture's wisdom in his descent upon a lamb; but shrink with disgust when he gloats over the riven flesh instinct taught the creature how to cater; his vile appetite prompts the gross survey. Thou art appetite! justice divine—most searching and most severe—gave thee a prey. Thou hatest her for my sake; I



love her, not for thine. Ah me, I am boastful! I am wrong! my guardian angel! thou only canst keep me sinless in this; for thy sake I would quench the torch that else had lighted her funeral pile. Mary! thou art left to me—what would I more than thy healthy soul?"

The entrance to the chamber of a strange foot caused Levison suddenly to spring from his seat, into which he as instantly reinstated himself, with "Hah! Elphinstone, my friend! it is you—forgive my abstraction; ill news and love have caused it; the last I am not ashamed to allow, seeing how soon I am to become a benedict, and you are my groom elect. Of the first that letter will acquaint you. Read it, and honour the sex for ever."

Elphinstone read the letter, and turning with emotion to his friend: "where is your answer, Levison?"

"Here," cried the young man, passionately striking his breast; "'tis plighted—Mary's! I will go to her immediately."

"Right," returned Elphinstone; "I wish others were as able as they are willing to fulfil their honourable intentions," he continued; "first beauty enthralled me, she whiled me from myself, till lost to her, and careless of favour from mortal eyes beside, I am left in the darkness of uncertainty—the loneliness of unrequited love."

"Really, Elphinstone, you are becoming more gloomy every day; shake off this humour, be a man, and wive as your station demands and introduction offers."

"'Tis because I am a man, you see me often thus possessed; will you not make allowances for a deep-seated malady?"

"You have not half let me into your secret; how can I judge of its sanity? That you are in love, and hopelessly, I believe; but whether for the three-and-thirtieth time, or first, I am as ignorant as a new-born butterfly. A phantom, I fear, is your pursuit; the spirit of a dream you

favourite child.

and, alas ! sadly

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“Methinks we

prose, my friend !

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The staircase ran

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ments to Miss Tw.

the carriage that set

in a *village* like this to have a friend to carry them about! How do, Levison? Elphinstone here! I thought I left "him wasting his sweetness in the desert air." The sugar question cloyed your stomach, and change of scene was recommended to recruit tone; but having got enough I presume you came back to curtail the revenues of the dog's-meat club, and speechify upon the barbarity to animals exercised by these vagrants—naughty persons! trying to live, forsooth!"

"Even you see this question in a ridiculous light, de Winter. Shame that it should agitate the axis of our little world, and so discover the poverty of the system. That it should ever have been carried into the house is an event I shall always regret, and pray it may not pass into a writ that will set a blister on poverty. Talk, ye learned, and rich, and great, of the savage cruelties storied to be exercised upon the community of tails—who impeach not your ownelves of mightier crimes, of this identical class, who, in

sport, kill horses, dogs, hares and foxes. Do away with steeples chasing; forsake hunting, racing, &c., and honest of deed, and just of purpose, find a true bill against your inferiors, at present, in cruelty. Multitudes of poor-creatures gain their livelihood through the services of these easily supported animals, few of whom are ill-treated by their masters. Some of our law-givers, harsh and unwise in their wisdom, would not only rob the poor of meat, but whip them afterwards; and the lower public, the way-worn jackass, will it not kick at the ruthless lash? Take care my friends, I have seen school-boys thrown by donkeys."

"Bravissimo, Elphinstone! you are a trump! the heat of your speech last night, and the prelude, I hope, to the donkey bill, that should immediately follow the superior animal's case. The long-eared are grievously misused at Clifton, Buxton, and all other watering places in our country of England."

"Not so bad neither," said Elphinstone laughing, "as in days of yore, when to my certain

knowledge a crooked pin was set on the point of a stick, with which the attendant appealed to the donkey's feelings, and stirred the latent fire within him. It has had a good effect—the pin has been thrown aside, the progeny being born in such bodily dread of these minute weapons, that they need only the pole presented, to start off in an instant gallop. The donkeys who repose have my sighs heaped o'er their turfey tombs. In my benevolence, can I do more for the animal race?"

"Yes," answered Frederick, "we will manufacture a slipper together, warranted not to kill, disfigure, maim or bruise, the innumerable creatures on whom we tread. This is sure to sell among the humane, and others will be forced by law to use it. A patent must be granted, and our fortunes are made—our fame established."

"Surely," added Elphinstone, "there is abundance of matter, and of a momentous nature, to employ the time and thoughts of our legislators; without meddling with such trifles; which, by undue attention and improper management,

become resolved into grievances, that furnish the ignorant as well as the vicious with tools for the worst designs. The oppressed swell the bands of sedition, and more crimes are committed than had discretion and charity been the guests of certain of our members, and gone more into public with them. The best motives, I doubt not, have suggested this motion, as many others of a similar stamp, that like dangerous though minute medicines, in the hands of the unskilful, destroy life instead of checking disease."

"What of the land of saints, bogs, and tatter-de-mallions?"

Elphinstone's colour mounted, his eyes fired, and the whole statesman stood forth in his demeanour.

"Ireland, poor deluded Ireland! Yes, strangely and strongly deluded—impoverished by her pretended friends—sweated and ridden hither and thither by a jockey, hired by priests for their own manifest ends—see her stroked and groomed to take the last great heat—imagine the

goal won—and then behold the former favourite muzzled, tamed, and tired by running—the provender and the proceeds her master's gain—leanness of carcase, ensuring the jade's submission. The assertion may appear inconsiderate to a casual observer, but he who studies the system with me, perceives the whole mass of Ireland's population is worked into commotion and rebellion by the leaven of hypocrisy under the garb of religion—a religion, whose votaries and distinguished heads—noble lords—(as a conventional phrase determines) at public meetings in broad day advocate the character of the most knowing whip on the turf as “that noble supporter of religion, Mr. O'Connell.” The man, who said this—the men who forswear their consciences in assent, to the delusion of the simple and unwary, have consummated the confusion and disgrace of a church that sets up a false beacon to wreck men's estates upon. Religion ! where's his purity ? where his righteousness, in his speeches ? in his agitating movements ? Is



the tongue unfurled that slanders, revels in foul language, and to whose taste, lies are as sweet nourishing morsels? Spurious the religion that boasts in this.

"I unhesitatingly pronounce priestcraft to be at the root of Ireland's misery. To stimulate the cry for Catholic emancipation, priests predicted a glorious advent. This gave the hierarchy a firmer tread on the soil. What they aim at, in repealing the union, is to obtain an establishment there—a wielding place, a fulcrum for the lever of their baneful policy—to erect a sentry-box for the Pope, (A) to watch over England, and steal her for himself—morally prostitute her children, and bring her, finally, into the distress her sister country shall mourn to the end of the world. We send missionaries abroad—we have most need of their services at home. England should concentrate her energies to missionize Ireland, and emancipate slaves (B) sold to the great dealer. Protestantism has cleansing virtues; the body and the mind acknowledge its vivifying influence; but wherever

the turgid waters of superstition roll, slime and dirt and disorder—a corrosive sublimate—they leave behind ; and never cleansed by this precipitate, but lapping fondly of the nauseous exhalations occasioned by its festering qualities, swoln by such auxiliaries, pour out more plagues in their baneful course.

“It makes me smile, and yet I am angry, when I hear O’Connell address Ireland in a mock-soothing strain, ‘Don’t scratch puss ! pray don’t, poor pussy !’ at the same time pinching her aside, and doing all in his power to direct the talons of the excited animal against her supposed tormentor—quite other than himself—her neighbour and blood relation—dearest best wisher, and active pilot through a sea of troubles to the drowning place. Freedom ! men rave of freedom ; the poor Irishman looks in the glass of freedom the priest upholds, and intoxicated at the sight of the finery in which he is there arrayed, is urged by vanity and folly to the rash attainment of a bubble joy.

“O’Connell promises freedom to his brethren,

who is not free himself. A Roman Catholic can never be a free man ; neither conscience, nor life, nor limb are free to him ; his will is another's, not his own, from his birth to his death, and afterwards, when purgatory enchains him. Freedom here is a conceit, the babble of a manacled felon. A Roman Catholic has a taskmaster over his motions, and bows to a yoke that no sectarian in the world, besides a heathen, would brook. He dare not think for himself, or feel, or act, but as his priest directs. He dare not understand the law of liberty the Testament fulfils ; he dare not read the most perverted edition of divine benevolence, without the priest peering over his shoulder, and obscuring the light that heaven brings out of darkness. To most, the holy Bible is forbidden even in this limited degree of usefulness ; priests reckon it too severe a test to oppose to them ; the Pope's face would blacken were the Bible open to all.

“The Roman Catholic's mind is shackled in belief as well as in practice ; he depends for

salvation upon the infallibility of popes, bulls, councils, edicts, traditions, fallacies. Too light of wear for such an individual is the simple belief in One Almighty, and his Son whom he has sent.

“Here will be discovered the insidious plan upon which she acts; beginning with religion and ending with legislation, the Church of Rome has men’s souls and bodies under command. How absurd to believe peace and comfort would accrue to Ireland under her dominion! Of all the religious communities that ever existed, the Romish church is the most exacting in obedience to her ministry and most avaricious in her claims. The riches of every nation she has ruled over have been transferred to her coffers; and poverty, in its most squalid shape, stalks beside her sleek abbey, and asks relief in her pillared porches—there receives a meagre compensation for innumerable wrongs, in a mouldy crust, and water, cold indeed as the rigid charity (C) that brings it

from the slack well. Confiscations of the property of her refractory children—masses for souls—red gold, as compound for dark sins—bribes for exemption from austerities—premiums for births, weddings and burials, distend her throat—and yet she craves for more.

“Advocates of her religion speak unpremeditated truth when they term Ireland a misguided country. Permit no tampering with the queen’s subjects—silence (D) the openly seditious by measures instant and applicable to their crime—occupy (E) the idle—weaken the influence of her false teachers by giving her other aliment than politics—provision for men, born to live here as well as hereafter—and her children will enjoy health, wealth, and tranquillity in this world; and shine out heirs of heaven along with us.

“For this, I love my church, I love the order and purity of the doctrines she disseminates; and I love my queen and country the more, for her directing my duty towards each; thus showing my allegiance to the sovereign of the universe. I

venerate the church (F) as an edifice most beautiful and most delicate, that, take away one ornament, or obliterate its real character by overloading with gaudy additions, and the symmetry is marred, the strength enfeebled; so great a necessity is there for preserving unity in its members, and maintaining inviolate the tracery that designates its architecture. Although a high churchman, (in which title I boast), I do not aspire so loftily, nor agree with some, who, upon the upper end of a plank (like children playing at see-saw) are nearest to fall when highest in the air. I desire to preserve a due and consistent balance, that no mechanism can lower or retard.

“The church keeps Ireland ours—is the lamp of truth and loyalty in the sister-kingdom; minish its powers, and darkness worse than death will cover her fair lands, and spread till it extends over England’s face.”

“Hold up, Elphinstone, hold up,” exclaimed de Winter, who had yawned till his eyes ran water, “I can’t stand this any longer,; to sit it

out would extinguish patience for the future in love and all things. I am done up, and need no further proof or spectacles to perceive you are as attached to your post as a felon to the gallows."

"You are a *soothe-sayer*, de Winter; I have frequent occasions of complimenting you on the choice of your periods. If I may be so rude, where did the last come from?"

"Is it the rope you mean, or would insinuate that all my witty remarks are quotations?"

"No, only that your quotations are *impromptus*."

"Genius will show itself—there's no concealing it, as the man said when he tried to hide the monument in his breeches-pocket. But do you desire to hear my last? I will give it *verbatim*. Lady Juniper, under whose roof I have been domiciled, has lately procured the oddest fellow for a footman, I ever heard comment upon the lights and shades of his neighbours' better and worse. For the last time this season we attended

at court, where stars are now strewed so thickly, one would almost think himself traversing the milky way. Upon our return home, the countryman, (who it seems had never heard of such things before) gravely asked the coachman, 'what is a levee, Thomas?' Thomas made answer: 'Fy, where all the big vigs crowd to wisit the queen.' 'Hah! I see—a sort of swell-mob,' remarked my dry friend.' He is a blue in his way, and one day was heard half soliloquizing and half aloud to his companion: 'This is a strange world, but it is the atoms make it strange. Now, Thomas, you're an atom.' 'You're a worsen,' growled the offended dignitary, 'so mind your own business.' 'Diffusion of useful knowledge,' commented our friend.

"This brings me to my business for coming here. I was desired to pick up a couple, or more, of stray young birds of my own feather, to make up a party to-night. You are just the fellows for the Junipers' taste, and Miss Twizzle will be ravished to see you. Miss Twizzle is my lady's



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"I start by  
interrupted Le

"Then you  
Frederick, with

"I'd die first

to hear this, my almost brother!" said Frederick, shaking his friend's hand. "All along I recommended Emma, but *will* must have his way."

Levison withdrew his hand, and for a moment thought Frederick like his mother.

The heir of Gwyn Dinas did not seem to notice this motion, but ringing the bell, and inquiring for a "Beelzebub match," directed the valet to light his "fat friend," for the purpose of sealing a packet Levison might convey to head-quarters.

"A very nice young man, that servant of your's, L.; pray is he a relation?"

Elphinstone rose to depart. "I am engaged to-night, de Winter. A question of peculiar interest comes on late, which I prophesy will employ the house beyond the hours of ordinary parties. Plead my excuse, and now good-bye. If I don't see you before, we shall meet at Gwyn Dinas about the end of the month."

"All right—to lead Levison to the slaughter, eh! and bag a few grouse afterwards, when we adjourn to a covey at Fern Park, and pitch into

the partridges, and finish with the pheasants at Elphindale — isn't it so? How I wish, for Charmouth's sake, the old governor was dead. He is the veriest screw on earth, and has got such a long worm that I fear he will never be driven home. I say all disgusting people ought to be hanged."

"Pray, de Winter, did you ever contemplate suicide?"

"Faith, no, Elphinstone, methinks you look the likeliest of us tree-e-e;" and with a laugh they separated.

"A fine-minded fellow that," said Levison, who had remained silent and thoughtful the greater part of the time; "he left us thinking we might have to talk over family affairs."

"What is the matter with him L.? he looks terribly cut up; to tell you the truth I was sorry after I spoke about suicide."

"You feared," returned Levison, "you had billeted him. I apprehend no danger; he was

ve when we first became acquainted, and had  
e, in a measure, recovered. This is a relapse.”  
Heigh-ho !” said de Winter, affectedly, “I  
he breaks girls’ hearts by the dozen, or they  
k theirs for him, which is much about the  
e thing. A fellow who has been so long  
ad, and seen so many varieties of the sex, I did  
dream could have fallen into the old trap thus  
7 in life.”

Highly as I esteem my friend,” said Levison,  
cannot help remarking he has been very  
ering of late, in some of his worldly interests,  
possibly what you mention is a failing of his;  
I can never consider it a feather in any man’s  
; it rather deserves to plume his bier. Aware  
y counsels, I opine he has kept his council in  
particular close from me; but the fault will  
erceived by its entail, and this last entangle-  
t may account for his wanton rejection of  
e very admirable appointments without the  
try, offered by his influential friends. A  
er with the feelings of others will sooner or

later meet a reward in his own way. Probably Elphinstone is undergoing this chastisement. I hope, though bitter the drug, it may work a cure."

"That's to say, Levison, glad the poisonous snake has received a blow upon the tail, causing him to writhe and twist to his extermination."

"The extermination of the evil principle within him," continued Levison, "when the beautiful creature may be handled without danger."

"I see your drift, my boy," enjoined Frederick; "you want me to believe, Edgar Levison is a marvelously proper husband for any young lady, Miss Mary de Winter in particular. I grant it, and am ready to quarrel with the man who dares impugn my word. Nay, don't laugh, or perchance yourself first will come under my serious displeasure. Joking apart—allow me to advise Levison, as soon as you can look about you, to purchase a nice house in London. This is all you want to make you one of us. Sell a part of your interest in the country, and show your wife

something of civilized life. Of course you will come to town in the season?"

"If I visit this place at all, it will be upon business. Spring is a young lady with whom you may have a distant acquaintance in London, but it is only in the country you can become sufficiently intimate to be enabled to appreciate her many excellencies, and discover her beauties. Intolerable to be mewed up in this cage in this wide city! I would rather be a rook, building my nest in some tall tree, where nothing could mar my horizon, than a chimney jackdaw of England's proud capital."

"Since the fit is on you, I'll take my hat and leave for the present. A season for everything, everything in season," said Frederick. "We'll talk of the house next Lady-day. To be introduced to an ox with a hammer between his ears, is to meet the animal under unfavourable circumstances; but when served up, a baron of beef is no bad object of discussion, as my tooth-pick can testify. You'll come to your senses by and bye—

so, bye, bye, Levy. I'll be up to the muster." And wishing speed to the horses that should carry his friend to the "drop," de Winter adjourned to a lounge in some botanical gardens, to disguise in the odours of flowers, his pique at Levison's obduracy, in not fixing upon a town residence—a move Lady Hester particularly recommended her son to urge, should Levison still remain attached to his first love—a thing she much doubted

—since Mary was dreadfully altered. And Lady Hester believed that Levison—like most other young men—would be glad to find a knot in the rope—an excuse for his creeping out of the noose. Frederick felt the force of her suggestions, already enjoyed the comfort and convenience of a brother's table and stable, and repaired accordingly to his friend's apartments, with what success we have just seen; and following up his parent's prescription for another patient, he meditated culling, and presenting (with an original poem, extracted from the honey of the bees that banqueted on it) a nosegay intended for Miss

Twizzle—a not inconsiderable heiress, included in Lady Hester de Winter's list of desirables, should the beautiful country nymph fail of being won over to her son's cause.



## CHAPTER II.

### A DIGRESSION

When nations are to perish in the  
'Tis in the church the leprosy begin  
The priest, whose office is, with zeal  
To watch the fountain and preserve  
Carelessly nods and sleeps upon the  
While others poison what the flock  
Or, waking at the call of lust alone  
Infuses lies and errors of his own :  
His unsuspecting sheep believe it ;  
And, tainted by the very means of  
Catch from each other a contagion  
The foul forerunner of a general  
Then truth is hush'd, that heresy

The religion of the Jews was  
tended to redeem men from by  
their men and will nation men

discipline ; also to engage the fugitive will, place it under a wholesome restraint, and occupy time which the unenlightened animal man would, of his own unconstrained habit, have devoted to crime and disorder.

Throughout this religion of ordinances, under what form was the Saviour of the world chiefly typified ? That of a fair, innocent, simple lamb. When the time arrived—when a sufficiently enlightened generation was produced, capable of receiving and comprehending the sublime elucidation of ages of mystery—in mercy, in condescension, in awful love, the Almighty God presented his Son himself, as a sacrifice for sin—as the Deity to be worshipped to all eternity. In a mask of flesh the Godhead came. Jesus in his mode of living was frugal without ostentation, his precepts full of light, comprehension to the meanest intellect, the poorest subject, the untutored slave—replete with wisdom, yet plain and easy.

From a mount, to multitudes he preached ! in

the synagogue as in the field and garden, in the house of the poor as in the palace of the rich. His life was a tissue of perfection. As herald of the gospel—lord of the light—he bequeathed a brilliant example of piety, purity, and zeal to his future ministers, that they would do well to follow. He chose his apostles—the pastors he placed over his people—from the lowly and stricken of the human race; he left the rich and the lettered, elevated far above their brethren, to walk on stilts to the heaven of their ideal—preferring individuals who, unambitious of refuting sound doctrine, through their ignorance of the philosophical theories of the lawyer-read, became easier convinced of sin. Their ability to listen to and heed words of instruction, their diligence in their temporal callings, caused him to ordain them to spiritual labours; they sought to win souls, they sought to catch souls; but they sought not to blind souls.

Those beautiful and expressive words of the Saviour deserve more attention than is usually

directed to them. True, the saint lays them to his bosom, and feels the comprehensive invitation fulfilled; but the natural man, the nominal christian, has not yet applied the salve, nor does he know the disease it is intended to heal. "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He then addressed the Jews—he now speaks to us—professing christians; "come," he says, "lay aside the burden of your sins, with the ordinances, severe and piteous, designed to cure them; come to the free fount, the lucid stream that runs for all; no deception in its crystal waters; it but displays the pebbles, sin, that have sunk, never to rise on its pure bosom more. Triumphant, it washes wastes and desert souls, making them to blossom and emit sweet perfumes, fruitful in every good word and work.

Ministers of the church of England! Pastors of my people! do ye "follow the lamb whithersoever he goeth?" have ye his meek countenance, his homely garb? without spot, without stain,

beautiful in its purity, washed by the dew of heaven? The descending glory of your God, his simple precepts, his lamb-like innocence, have ye these features? Too frequently a black sheep stands in the door-way, desecrating the fold—dyed in the college, deep in Latin and Grecian lore, and pagan mysteries. At the risk of foundering his faith at the offset, the young candidate for orders hears the bible disputed, discussed, and diverted from its even tenor; is taught to support its text with arguments to meet sophists and infidels, pointed by man, not received as a quiver from the Lord of the Bow; who, as he has created light, can surely maintain its influence infinite. Simplicity is thought too mean for man; he mystifies himself before he is considered thoroughly fathomed in wisdom. Do the works of Horace, Virgil, Ovid, Euripides, and Juvenal, with other and professed pagans, tend to elevate the morals of the men who study them? A few good precepts are mingled in the mass; but the young men's minds are choked

with the more beguiling evil, and there is no room left for the wholesome morsel which amounts to what the lower animals teach us—the bird's attention to its young—the dog's fidelity to its master—the beaver's constructiveness—the bee's industry—the ant's providence. Give these creatures human names, and sing of them, as affectionate parents, faithful friends, consummate architects, active citizens and statesmen, with intelligent generals laying up stores for a siege—and you display the admired sentiments of these authors, making them your own and nature's.

Remember, there is not one word of heavenly teaching in these books; whereas there is much that tends to debase the nature of man: for instance, if he follows his author, he looks upon woman (that his mother is) as so derided, so humiliated, so brutal, so disgusting, that as poets make use of her, he abuses and degrades her in mind and deed.

Many of the favourite pagan writers lived before our Saviour; a few were contemporaneous;

yet he does not point them out as worthy the regard of his followers. Then why should christian England give her clergymen such tutors ?

Simplicity is the essence of religion. The place of worship that the poor may enter, and understanding all he hears and sees, in deep humility prostrate himself before his Maker, and adore the giver of all good things—this is the porch to heaven, and makes it accessible to all.

What has been done of late ? Not content with the confusion existing in the present state of the church, her abused funds, her bartered livings, her vain repetitions, her ungodly ministers, lights rise and burn on the communion table, mountebank changes in raiment, and diversities of posture are made ; auricular confession is concerted ; the conscience purposed to be enthralled by a presumptuous mediator between God and man ; the precepts of scripture are misused, or tortured to men's devices ; confession is friendly and holy community is good for the soul, but it must be

public that benefit may be derived ; mutual commendation, exhortation, and prayer of many fervent hearts for heavenly support, direction, and forgiveness, must claim the respect of every rational as well as religious individual ; but woe to that man who places his conscience in the keeping of a priest ; in one instance he may be a proper man—in ninety-nine he is a hypocrite.

Again, where is your contrition, if you confess your sin to a fellow-mortal, who is bound by oaths to keep the secret ? You have as much satisfaction in addressing stone walls, and ought to receive quite as much justification ; for the one is a dead wall—the other is like yourself, dead in sin. These lamentable inroads upon our religious as well as national freedom were projected by a man, or class of men, who, instead of being set apart for the ministry, taught the only One Book, are with all other professors and characters of men fed alike upon the husks of learning, confused by theory, confounded by the incorrigible practices of their heads and governors ; thus more readily



instigated by the evil one, herald, and paramour of the arch-sorceress, they devise new religions, expound new doctrines, and are verily fast returning to the slavery from which Jesus came to set us free.

A few deeply read, and at the same time (what is very compatible) purely educated men, might with advantage be mingled in the mass; but let it be evident they are first deeply imbued with the spirit of divine grace, then Paul's wisdom

may be of use to them. Such persons are only needed by a miserably small proportion of mankind, whose learning renders them hard of belief, because possessing the "wisdom of fools." The poor, the lame, the blind, the halt, the withered, will hobble to heaven before those who must have the way finely flagged for their superior feet.

How nearly does the state of things above described assimilate us to the church *we should separate from*—a church, which has fallen from her first estate—become, what we seem striving to follow—a church, where gaudy liveries, stifling

incense, Latin orisons, perpetual bowings and risings, sprinklings, and washings, mingle in God's light of day with their heathen fire and painted tapers—startle one who enters a place of her worship, and incline the sensible as well as the foolish to laugh at all the indescribable mum-mery. I defy an enlightened being to feel devotion in such a scene—'tis a burlesque upon religion.

To her own she pretends to elucidate this pageantry, describing the change of raiment from scarlet to green, from white to purple and black, as emblematical of her feasts, fasts, and particular employments; her dead language (properly typical of her own state) as more acceptable to the Deity—one word of which the ignorant do not understand—seeking only to be saved by sounds. Are these the Saviour's precepts?

By confession priests have long held the souls of men in their grasp, who signing their passports, drop them one by one to hell, where presently

themselves fall, and heavy burdens keep down their dupes.

A mean religion, confounding the Deity with saints, angels, women, and children—unmanly, unnatural, ignoble. Saints and martyrs in our memories, women and children in their places in our household, and God in his—above all—without one to take his glory from him, or one to add to it, which is presumptuous.

A cowardly religion—all-relying faith in one mediator, entire dependence upon him, being out of the question. Christians believe there is one all-seeing eye—one all-hearing ear—one only who knows the thoughts and intents of the heart. These are the awful Godhead's peculiar features—what make him superior to man on earth, or angels in heaven; yet do the Roman Catholics elevate saints, angels, and martyrs to the might, power, and extensive perfections of gods. Millions address the same saint, or rather deification, on the same day, probably at the same hour, in

many different countries and continents far asunder, and each believes himself heard.

Men now-a-days complain there are no miracles to establish their faith. Here is a great miracle, and yet it is prophecy fulfilling in our sight; these men in whom the world discovers much wisdom—no slender sense in other things—the subjects of the Church of Rome, are given over “to believe a lie.” Yes—a lie. I will show you the truth of the lie in all its abomination and low device.

On one occasion, on All-soul’s day, when the Italian soldiers, disciplined under our British officers during the campaign, went to attend mass in one of the churches at Naples; crabs, dressed in little bits of red cloth, were exhibited at a distance, when a curtain was raised, and these crawling things declared to be the souls of the departed, that were yet troubled in purgatory, for whom masses were required. This wrought upon the superstitious soldiery, and money was collected to emancipate the grievously tormented.

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deposited at the bottom of an exhausted lake, that seemed to separate a nunnery and monastery, between which there was a subterranean passage, and conclude intercourse with the opposite houses, and some tragic occurrences ensuing.

These are not mentioned as remarkable and isolated instances of depravity, but a few of a long series, acting over again every year, added to every month, nay, every day. Who will cavil with these assertions may examine into the fabrication of our Lady of Loretto, where the very pap-boat from which our divine master is asserted to have been fed, is preserved with other hideously distorted fables and fabulous articles—in the centre of the papal jurisdiction, under the immediate protection of the Pope. Or the tolerant man, who would recommend mild measures, with this combination, or cowards who approve of concealment, let them rehearse the book of martyrs, the bloody annals of the Prostitute's reign, and the quailing horrors (G) of the Inquisition, the visible hell upon earth ;

where tongues were heard to yell and moan, and bitterly wail ; *and shall be tortured to speak, who keep silence now.* Give such flame-crested coursers the reins—give them opportunity, and they will plunge breast-high in gore. Superstition has so obscured the senses of their flock, that when the priest tells them, for his own ends, not to read such a book—not to examine for themselves—they implicitly answer, “No, my father!” and in this, do not lie.

We are commended to be charitable towards all, but we are not told to believe all ; nor did Jesus refrain from showing up the speciousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, whom he calls ‘hypocrites,’ but desires his followers to beware of them, as his apostles warned of false teachers, blinding the minds of their hearers by lying vanities. So let us take warning, nor think we are uncharitable in being prepared against “the wiles of the devil.”

Rally round your shaken temple ; be ye the pillars of the church, ye ordained Protestant

men ! Mar not the edifice raised so high ; slight not the work of the great master-builder, lest in its fall, suddenly and terribly it crush your unworthy bodies, and in everlasting darkness confine your immortal souls ! , Get ye out of the rubric slough—the fog of learning, and fashions of weaker years—frail men's ceremonial laws ! Acknowledge but one legitimate father of your church—Jesus Christ the righteous. Preserve your conduct pure and unimpeachable as your garments and your conscience, setting aside all superfluous works, read the engraven word of God, and lift your hands to him. Pray, and receive light into your system ; diffuse it among men, and rise to heaven with redeemed souls, swelling your comet-train !

If ye desire to purify your church, first purify yourselves ; then strike at the root of error—the education of your ministry ; decide not upon their fitness for this responsible post, till you have consulted your master, Jesus, the archbishop of the christian diocese ; and send them forth





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Saviour, who,  
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says: “Render  
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their lives, which are nominally consecrated to their master ; men who bring religion into disrespect, because instilling principles of revolt instead of forbearance, humility, and brotherly love, which must tend to improving the social through the moral state of their flocks, and rendering them good subjects as well as good men. Whether this last be, or be not, a true, plain, and honest statement, which shall resolve itself into a radical fact, if acted upon, the inferior clergymen have no business with politics and laws ; but to take care lest they infringe them, and to submit to their superiors, setting a godly example.

Whatever there may be admirable in Shakespeare, 'tis disgraceful that a reverend's name should be attached to any edition of such an author. How dare he devote his master's hours to a work which tends to lead the minds of the multitude from good to all seducing evil ? Surely this individual should have distorted himself upon the stage, and not been so bold as to aim at an higher degree.

Works of a similar cast are thus edited, without the slightest repugnance being felt to the deed. What a forgery upon religion are such men's names!

Some will say, "I do it to improve the literature of my country, in which I take a deep interest." This is no justification to the pretended Bible expositor, nor in that book of infinite wisdom will he find a shadow of authority for his acts. If, by the community at large this revision is thought necessary, as there are many talented politicians among the laity, so are there worthy authors; let them revise the favourite work. Abstain, ye clergy! from all semblance of evil.

As there are commonly in our church meddlers in other men's business, to the detriment of their own, so are there drones in the hive which should be cast out—men who say, "I open my church, I read prayers, and read sermons written by the most approved pens; and if the people do not come, I can't help it; my heart is not in the

service; how can I expect others to like what I have difficulty in conducting?"

"Compel them to come in" is utterly forgotten; nor are they fit to receive such a charge, who do not appear furnished with the official requisites for fulfilling it. When they are called to attend the sick, or the dying, they go—but never of their own accord seek occasion for usefulness.

Some are so ignorant in temporal as well as spiritual concerns, that it is a matter of no small marvel how they passed the college gates. The generality of our clergy are morally and physically disqualified for their peculiar situation.

Can a church prosper where such individuals are consecrated by their fellows, who are as unfit for the bishopric as these men of their ordination; who, instead of being selected for their prominence in piety, are too frequently chosen for their prominence in learning? The masters of schools, from whipping little boys, are preferred

to lash the souls of men into their peculiar fantasies.

The hydra-head of dissent must swell and prosper mightily. What body of men have materially effected this? and are every day contributing to the extension and diffusion of opposite doctrines? Clergymen of the Church of England, look well into your own community! Reform, regenerate, then will all good men follow after ye, and respect the temple of the nation. Preach duty to God and man—not as the Roman Catholics, who take the first part of the text, and presumptuously appropriating it to themselves, obliterate the other, so far as it militates against their love of universal rule; thus rendering their people notoriously *the worst subjects to temporal kings* that the world, with all her religions, has produced. This is *their aim, their end*; and this, in all nations of the earth under their dispensation, has been their accomplishment—to the distraction of order, and the destruction of life.

Examine—try your own selves—look suspiciously upon those who, wordily, profess to support the church, but who are in the pay of your enemies—agents for the advancement of their foul mysterious ends.

Are your heads stanch? are their hearts the Lord's? in all things are they consistent? As followers of Christ are they ready "to spend and be spent" for the salvation of immortal souls?

## CHAPTER III.

But this bright creature's love seem'd all too fair,  
 To give me leave to be a cavalier there :  
 For love brings sorrow . yet you might deny  
 A troubled frowning in that brilliant eye,  
 A troubled shadow in that varying cheek,  
 A blush in the trembling lip to speak  
 A weakness of soul equal to its strength  
 Something the spirit could not rest upon .

L. E. L.

When Lúci recovered from the first horror  
 her surprise, finding it meet its object again, as  
 sweet and sweet was as degrading to her mind  
 as it was painful to her feelings and injurious to her  
 nature—until by the necessity—she discovered  
 to her father the true character of his visit  
 What a burning tongue and cheeks appeared

pale and crimson, the fair girl recounted the deceiver's treachery, and placed the burden of Josephine's secret in her sire's faithful keeping.

Solicitous the acquaintance should instantly cease, Mr. Leslie commissioned the trusty Power, that should the same individual call the second time, he was unreservedly to state, that "Miss Leslie was not at home to Mr. Elphinstone"—a message which the young man no sooner received than he started for London, leaving his relative provoked at the waywardness of his conduct, unable to account for his motions; and as if by mutual consent, his name was never mentioned in their seasons of intercourse by Lady Willoughby or Edith.

Mary took a weeping farewell of her cousin, sad at leaving her in the melancholy state of mind late events had induced, nor could the excitement incidental to her situation diminish her anxiety for the health of this tender friend, whose innocent happiness had been so short-lived, so early



shattered, beyond the power of mortals to make whole again.

Separated from her friends, by whom her sighs and smiles were read and registered, Edith, released from observation, gave way to grief, that her loneliness of situation materially tended to increase; and after each burst of sorrow, upbraided herself in the bitterest terms for this unwomanly, immodest, and unpardonable betrayal of feeling, excited by reflections connected with one she ought never to consider in milder terms than contempt, allied with fear and pity.

She trembled when contemplating the baseness of this perjured being, and wondered he could deceive her into comparative intimacy, who must have some traces of evil, apparent to a scrutinizing eye, in that form she had so blindly thought faultless.

Edith, upon grave consideration, blamed her over-relying confidence, and with a frown of wounded pride, convulsively opposing her mental

agitation, she dismissed for a season the dark intrusion.

Her faith in the world broken, the reality that had so utterly dissipated the wild fancy of her dreams dispirited the young enthusiast, and again she walked those halls a lonely, hapless wanderer ; a sense of desertion crept over her mind, and she sighed in vain for peace that simplicity brings. She saw no more beauty in the butterfly's plume, nor caught his sportiveness ; the sun rose o'er the landscape without effect, and set without being regretted. The gentle gales wooed her cheek, nor met their wonted reply—the soft blush had faded in sadness.

Frighted at the echo of her feet in the desolate gallery, she regarded timidly the ancestral dames and mailed warriors who held a dumb court within those walls midst the dust of centuries ; and fleeing to her own little chamber sought repose that only cheated her with dreams in hideous shapes. Suddenly and strangely changed, she made mirth no more, nor seemed to love its

gay attire. A thunder-clap, the tempestuous wind and falling rain, sounded musical in her ears. When the dogs howled, and the owlets screamed, Edith was pleased and smiled; attuned to her feelings, she exulted when the storm was at its highest, and in that moment, as her father sought his child, to beguile the tedious hours of their terrors, he found her sometimes with the window thrown widely open, contemplating the fitful lightning's illuminations; at another, singing to the thunder, and invariably cheerful. But when all without was calm, and Mr. Leslie in tenderest tones inquired, "Was her health as good as ever? why then his darling's cheek so pale?"—with an hysteric laugh she repelled the tears that his softness and her languor fostered, avoiding his presence, lest quick-sighted love should light upon her secret.

Edith had not visited Nelly since her untoward adventure. She hesitated now to meet her nurse, from whom it would be impossible to hide her

feelings: duty called her hither, whilst consciousness held her back. Thus many days elapsed, and her obligation became more urgent—her dread of the encounter increased.

One evening she sat in her room meditating when she should take this journey, summoning to her assistance all possible topics of conversation irrelevant to the present subject, to engross her time at Rochelle, and divert Nelly's attention from herself; and finally she condemned her own indolence and delay, grieving lest her conduct might have appeared careless towards this much loved friend. Her fingers pressed her forehead, and tears filtered through the openings; she mourned her fault, and with candour severe confessed the cause; she spoke earnestly and aloud to herself, declaring in what she had shown intemperance and revolt, and resolving to amend whatever she had done wrong, concluded by asking heaven's blessing on her endeavours.

A gentle tap at the door apprized Edith of a visitor; now tranquil she moved to open it, and

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"It was n  
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birds to prey  
cealed."

"Oh sure, d

the food they live on ; but if my lamb's soft fleece is ever ruffled by their talons, shall I not seek to smooth it ? Ye have had much company of late, and many helpers in the house from the village ; such ignorant folk talk from very simplicity, and are no more to be blamed than parrots, although the poor things do blab to our confusion sometimes. They love thee, nor wist it pains thee ; but, darling ! did I hear the name aright ? Was it the same with his you met on the common ? One who saw him says it was the hero of that bloody chase, and I ween, the Lady Josephine's foul destroyer."

"The same Nelly ; breathe not his name," said Edith blushing, then growing very pale ; "and him I met at the ball, and hastily and foolishly invited hither. Oh, my friend, my counsellor !" throwing her arm round the widow's neck, "I was shocked at the discovery, and stupefied ; I have hardly yet recovered. 'Tis as you often said, I see the world now is very false ; deformity

stalks abroad, and man is the scare-crow that has bewildered me. I see nothing but tears behind, before, and around me. You only, and Mary, with my own darling papa, are good and beautiful. I love you more for the few I may love. I desire not to live beyond you, but to die when you die. I fear to be left in the world alone."

"Nay, my child! thou must bide his will," said Nelly, pointing upwards, whilst her tears watered the prostrate Edith's neck. "Look at me, my darling! I'll show you the way. Raise thy lovely face; the daisy does not scorn me so. Alone! that can never be, whilst he who made thee reigns. Shine out, my jewel! cast aside that veil of faithless brine, and live in purity of hope. Be joyful, be thankful, be praiseful! thou hast discovered a venomous thing ere it hurt thee; its charms had lighted on my dove. Then Nelly might lie down in the tomb of her fathers, and pray the old worms to make a short end of her. To say I cradled thee for nought, I hushed

thee that thou mightst wake screaming, I watched over thee that thou mightst be full early deserted, I fostered thy beauty that it might be destroyed ! thou mightst be mangled body and soul by a villain, and cast into the foul waters where his other victims sink, to appear when the last convulsion of nature shall, heaving, bring them to judgment-light !—my prayers were not for this, and none dare say they are in vain. Now, kiss me, my colleen, and tell me you're blithe to see me this pretty even. Harkee, I have not forgotten the way ; it were hard for me to miss the oyster that holds my pearl, and as ye will that I tell how I came, sure, 'tis Briar, the crazy mule, that bore me, whilst Maggie led the beast. She borrowed a pillow for me of Roundman, her master ; and from the Pipe and Tumbler I set out on my travels ; all the way I thought and thought of lang syne and Erin, your grandparents, the young squire that went away before the old one, who died in a foreign land, and was swathed in blood, with my own noble boy, Mike,



and many a faithful one beside. The ruins of time are crumbling round me ; myself, the last whole stone of the once proud building, and worn into deep furrows, the blast whistles in the crannies, and rocks me sore at times. Judy of the Cairn, her shape, her seeming, sat under every bush I passed ; her caoine I thought I heard at times. Where is she now ? the untameable, the wayward ? her helpless innocents are they babies still ? and Corny, what of him ?

'Tis seldom I go over those gone-by days, but when I do, with the palsy of age I am apt to be garrulous.

“Miss Mary ! she'll be happy soon ; my blessing on her ! she well deserves reward for the trial she has so nobly borne ; her pilot is stout and true ; I honour the young man for his fidelity towards his love, his forbearance towards the opposers of his honourable union, and oppressors of his wife—that is to be.”

“Oh, Nelly dear !” said Edith earnestly, “I

never said she was oppressed, though I cannot conceal they were opposed."

"But, my child! though you didn't say the word, and 'tis true for you, I can guess the under and over of a thing from the middle, and Miss Mary's watery eyes were red for nothing. Her face, to my old sight, wasted with her body—then her laugh of late was far from natural. If she smiled at some queer story I remembered to tell and 'liven ye, that parting of the lips minded me of ice cracking. Her trial was none of the lightest neither; for when all was settled to her liking, she did not answer the sun of good tidings as the earth after a shower, and cheer up before you. No, no, the sun shone—you could see its light upon the water, for the heart was moist still—a deluge had nigh drowned it."

"I have heard from her lately; she said she was not strong; but this was trifling, as Edgar's letters acted little tonics, and supported her in

her faintness. Every one was kind to her, not excepting the Misses Macklin, who embroidered the most costly handkerchiefs and reticules, which (she was given to understand,) were intended for wedding presents."

"You see, my darling! I knew her health was weak, and contrary to alarming ye, I also know it will recover fast after she is Mrs. Levison, and anxiety takes its flight with the clouds that have gone over her head. She is worthy of good, and cakes should be her portion if I had the baking."

Attending her aged nurse, and guiding the slow mule over the heather, Edith enjoyed the cool breezes of an autumn evening, whilst her bosom swelled with mingled love and pride for the dear, dear friend of her earliest years. Who so faithful, so benign, made her child's care the first object of her life, next to the grand one of her creation.

Meteor walked beside the travellers, a jealous

guardian of so fair a charge and so much worth ;  
he looked from the face of one to the other,  
seeming sensible of the understanding existing  
between each, and satisfied with his own situa-  
tion in their affections.

CH

There are  
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Amorous as a love  
Edith regarded the  
ful season of her  
return with impatience  
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contemplation; the  
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tions of how soon she should have the joy of seeing the sweet bride decked in the flowers of spring as most consonant with her situation, her lips and eyes telling nought but pleasure, occupied Edith and beguiled time of the sting she late had found in its tediousness, causing a constant recurrence of her thoughts to an infinitely painful subject. Thus hour after hour passed, and days were saddened truly, when an expected letter failed to appear. Subsequent to her last meeting with Nelly, our heroine experienced a severe trial of patience in the continued silence her cousin Mary preserved towards her, without any cause being assigned.

Edith's anxiety increased with the void, and her distress became extreme, when a long letter told more than all she had anticipated, and gave her a commission it was most difficult to execute. Mary's own words will discover her interesting character more fully than the dispassionate language of a biographer.

" My beloved cousin Edith,

" You must prepare yourself as I proceed to learn ill-tidings, and renew your confidence in your friend, who has been so long silent, yet never for one moment forgetful of the love she owes you above another on this earth. Such words will startle her who might have believed Edgar Levison had the first place in Mary's affections; till now he had, nor do I blush to add he deserves an higher still than I can give him; but this union I have torn from my heart, yea, with an effort that caused blood to flow from the separation. This was not at the suggestion of friends, or through compulsion; but my own voluntary act. I am no longer a fit object of man's attentions; the small-pox has blighted my poor body to such a degree that I dare not require a fulfilment of our contract, nor do I desire such a consummation, which would entail upon my husband a glaring and lasting evil—upon me, a pining regret for beauty I had no reason to believe should last—both displeasing to

heaven, and destructive to the happiness yet left me, in feeling I can submit humbly to His will, who am in his hands altogether; neither must I permit my honour to be impugned by the consideration that I took advantage of a young man's confidence who wooed a gladsome maiden, and wedded the bride of sorrow. Accordingly I enclose a letter to Captain Levison, and entrust you with its safe dispatch. Here I am aware my sentiments would not be listened to, and therefore I take this means of conveying my final decision to him I was proud and happy once to call my lover.

“The aspect of affairs at home since my illness has undergone a woeful change. Believing I shall be deserted by my betrothed, yet rather anxious to compel him to the marriage than to allow their fears to appear, I am treated with much coldness, and could not venture openly on the step I have just taken with any possibility of the letter reaching its destination. Too late to intercept, I shall declare the deed and abide the



disapprobation of my family, that I fear not, since my conscience acquits me of wrong in thought or in deed.

“ Fortune, that had long coquetted, discovered her brightest charms to jilt me at last—so nearly won, and early lost has my happiness been. Thus ere he reached it, hope—the peak of friendly rock espied by the drowning—is covered over with the billows of affliction ; yet it remains a rock, Edith, and when again the waters subside, you may take your stand on the pinnacle, whilst I cling for life to the fretted edge, content to behold thee triumph over the murky tide. Dearest love ! already I feel relieved in confiding to you my sufferings, one who, I know, sympathizes in every sorrow ; yet I would not you should grieve much for me. The worst is past—I have done my duty, and from henceforth have obtained comparative tranquillity for this little breast, that has sent forth countless tears without being able to cry itself to sleep.

“ Applicable to your poor friend are those

beautiful words of dear old Nelly's: 'Down the bye-ways of life I preferred to roam, and would have culled the roses from the hedgerows, but He who guided me ordered far otherwise. Thistle and blackthorn only grew there; the poisonous nettle has chastened me with many a sting.' Tell her I have learned from her to bear these wounds patiently, and make resignation an offering to heaven.

"My dearest earthly friend, good bye! Speed my desires, and believe in the grateful memory of your

MARY."

With tearful eyes Edith received the letter so urgently commended to her care. She wished the task had not been decreed to her—that Mary had relented ere she sealed the fatal packet. That through her instrumentality Edgar and Mary should be separated for ever bore heavily on her mind, adding its burden to the disasters the day had revealed; but Mary was right, she felt the force of her arguments, and respected, whilst she

shuddered at the severity of their conclusion. Then why object to aid her cause by fulfilling this melancholy request? Edith walked slowly, but it was to the village post-office she bent her steps.

The firm yet resigned tone of Mary's letter struck Edith with peculiar force. It seemed to rebuke her for her weakness in a much more telling affliction; it gently alluded to this distress and lifted up her eyes to the beacon resplendent throughout the storm. Again she confessed Mary's superiority; new traits in her character were developed in each trial, all bright, all true, and link after link, Edith felt attached to her friend as by a polished steel chain to a staple. Edith placed the entrusted packet in the scarred jaws of a fierce-browed lion, and inwardly wishing the represented animal was alive, when she had almost courage enough at that moment to sacrifice her white hand, did he but devour that letter.

A second hurried past, and our heroine turned from the grim delusion. She comforted herself

with the assurance that Edgar would not be influenced by this decision ; otherwise he was not the character she believed him, and therefore the interruption of the match ought to be no longer a subject of regret. With prophetic energy, "all will yet be well," she murmured, and raised the latch of her nurse's dwelling.

"Did you hear that, my maid?" said Nelly, addressing herself to a sobbing figure, whose face was hidden in a check apron, "the angel bears thee good-will, and brings thee right wholesome news. Wipe your eyes, Maggy, my girl, all will yet be well. Didn't I tell you before ? if ye take the honey by stealth, ye'll get a blain by right ; follow the receipt I have given you ; it will act like a poultice ; and keep to your own hive in future, when the bees will know you."

As soon as the person called upon became aware that the lady Edith was a witness to her lamentation, she rose in evident confusion, and

making an unsteady curtsey to the visitor, hastened from the cottage.

"Poor Maggy!" said Nelly, "she has gone I do believe without telling me one story to-day—an evil practice she is much given to. Had I caught her in this plight at her own mother's house, or at the Pipe, with a face as bold as the dogs the fire-wood sleeps on, she'd tell me the onions had melted her a'most blind, and did I not smell them? they were over strong to be mistaken for another perfumer." I have got the twist of her tongue exactly, and were those very words written down, I'd be bound they wouldn't lie long without Maggy's taking them up in regular rotation. 'Tis hard; I have mixed medicines to cure her of this, but she does not mend the while. I am in good hopes however the trials it brings down upon her will smash the worm at the root, and the stem will prove healthy at last.

"But now, ma vourneen, you come near me; what damp is that on thy cheek? Water spoils

satin, and this is such a delicate one," said Nelly, kissing her.

Nelly's grief at learning the fate of Mary was almost absorbed in admiration at the nobleness of character displayed by her child's friend, which title of distinction she exulted in repeating.

"Yes, darling! 'tis proud I am ye have such a friend on this side heaven; hold fast by her hand, never let it go, for these blessings are as rich as they are rare. Young maidens and old! ye will do well with each other's love till the night of life, when death in his arms shall fold ye. I need not grieve now to think on death—soon shall the bridal morrow dawn for me."

Nelly raised her hands and face to heaven, as waiting with beaming gladness her acceptance there. For a while Edith's eyes steadily gazed on her; she could not bear the vision long; her lips quivered, her eyelids dropped, she fell in Nelly's lap, faintly ejaculating, "this is too much for me."

Greatly alarmed, Nelly saw her nursling weakness; now she feared the impression the hateful Elphinstone had made, which though she struggled to overcome, nature was not so strong as reason; and the one failed visibly, whilst the other exerted its energy to conquer for the welfare of both. Added to this, the distressing consequences of her friend's illness gave the young and feeling Edith an accumulation of sorrow that Nelly apprehended might threaten the stability of the system. Could the mother's constitution have been bequeathed to the child? She feared and trembled: "She would watch her, and she would strive to mention the false Elphinstone name, as allied with mystery and fraught with mischief. She would not leave a hiding-place to her darling's breast for the serpent to coil himself up in. She'd take a candle into every corner."

Thus Nelly soliloquized and resolved what she applied restoratives and addressed soft arguments to her precious child, whom she

shortly the satisfaction of seeing awake from her torpor, and even smile at her own weakness.

As Edith asked what was Maggy's affliction, Nelly thought this a favourable opportunity of gratifying her curiosity.

"Well, and I'll tell you, dear! Maggy (who I would not recommend as your maid, if she had been never so well taught the mechanical part of her profession, or the lowest servant in your household, as long as the want of truth remained) turned her back upon me for preventing her, as she declared, being your body-servant (to use her own expression). After a while she saw that she gained nothing by this foolish behaviour, and growing sorry, begged my pardon, and asked me to forgive her, seeing she was humble and I trusted altered; after a while I got her a place at the Pipe and Tumbler, where she is now, and where she fell in love with a good lad called Joe Goulding; the ostler and bar-maid, they might with honesty and steadiness recommend themselves to the old Roundman; who, I make little



doubt, will leave Joe the business, being his own sister's son. Instead of this, my lady distresses her poor lover by walking with half the loons in the hamlet, wearing an artificial flower in her bonnet, given her by one whom business took to the great town where he bought it ; a pink cap-ribbon was the gift of another ; a bead necklace of a third ; besides more things than my old *catareen* has washed his face times. Now this goes nigh to drive Joe out of his mind, or out of his love ; he has told her he shall run mad, certainly ; but she only laughs at him, and tells him to wait a bit. All this while she kept away from me, as sly as any old poacher. At last she has gone too far ; and yesterday-night Joe let her know he'd never trouble himself to say another word to her, which was as good as a regular dismissal ; so she comes to me and says, "'twas only because Charly Dawson kissed her, and sure, she couldn't help it !" I warned her if she wanted an honest man's favour, she was to return the ghost of everything she had gotten from her

gallants, and go and tell Joe what she had done ; after that, I'll engage one tear would bring him back, when she should take care to keep him, and behave herself. She was a long time loth to knock under, and vowed she would marry him at last, for the gipsey said so !

"This brings me to her confession ; for when she was melted, it flowed from her tongue as rain from a water-spout. It seems, a gipsey-wife had risen a great name in the country about, for her luck in fortune-telling. Maggy, curious and giddy, (her natural disposition) took a trip to a lone place a little ways off, where the camp lay ; they told her the mother was sick, and that she must kneel down and crawl into the hut, if she wished to learn good of herself through love and out. In that noisome place she found the gipsey witch, and crossing her hand with a sixpence, learned to spell her husband's name, and heard a great many things she did and she didn't ask to know.

Maggy had another piece of silver and some

coppers in her pocket, and, one after another, she went the way of the first; her last penny produced the number of children she should have, lose, and rear. The gipsy told her the wedding-day was not fixed yet, and she'd come again before that. In course she did, curious to know the exact time it should fall in; but this once she took the little Alaric Denham to be her companion, and shrewd in most things as she's silly in some, she thought the gipsy noticed his fine worked clothes, and coveted the chain that hung round his neck, and this tempted her to steal him, which happened the very next day, when the camp disappeared from the neighbourhood.

"And it was from thence his evil father bore the child, unknowingly, to his mother's arms; it makes me shiver when I think that man pressed his own offspring to his perjured breast, sheltered it from the cold, who had exposed both wife and infant to the chill of scorn. I blessed the baby saviour the same dismal night, but I mixed the poison in his cup which must poison every future

draught he drinks. I gave it, a wholesome warning to a fair and innocent young man ; it proved a judgment upon one haggard within."

"Oh, dear Nelly !" cried Edith, "do pray dismiss this horrid subject ; 'tis enough we know Al— Al— the babe is safe. When I am induced to contemplate these events, 'tis like being led to the brink of a precipice, and makes me very giddy." She placed her hands before her eyes, and seemed to feel as she described.

"Did you ever see a hen-bird hurt its chick ? it may tread on it sometimes, but not willingly. A-cushla-ma chree ! thou wast nestled here," crossing her arms on her breast, "the form the coney has left is warm still."

"I know it, my best guardian !" returned Edith, fervently, and pressed her lips upon those aged palms.

Maggy entered the cottage with almost as much haste as she had retired, and presenting herself before Edith in fresh eyes, and a clean apron, as if to convince the lady she must have

been under an optical delusion, did she imagine a tear had coursed her cheek within the twenty-four hours, and twenty-four days on the back of that,

When she thought Edith fully understood this, Maggy deposed to having encountered a sight of trouble to 'tice a letter from the post-boy, who wouldn't give it her after all; but she brought him hither with the bit of paper that had a big "haste" written on it, as she knowed where Miss was, and that she would like to catch an early acquaintance with the inside.

Here the guard of the Malvern mail—a little boy, sharp nine—touching his hat to his mistress first, and then to Nelly, surrendered the letter in question, and sallied on his way with newspapers for Mr. Leslie; his example was followed by the officious Maggy, who, finding herself silent for want of a listener, as Nelly had it, "made herself scarce."

"Pray put on your spectacles, dear Nelly," said Edith, handing the letter to her nurse.

"Lady Hester generally writes in hieroglyphics ; but this is as plain as print ; you cannot mistake a single letter. My aunt is determined I shall have no excuse for misunderstanding her."

Nelly read :—

"My dear niece,

"I write in the very greatest haste, to prevent your sending a certain letter addressed by my daughter Mary to Captain Levison, of the purport of which you are doubtless ignorant, or you would not consent to such an indiscreet and obsolete act, which the reading of romances could only have suggested. You are a girl of sense, Edith ; and I know will laugh at the absurdity, whilst you pity the weakness that has induced your poor cousin wantonly to fling away the best match in ———shire, merely because she fancies the small-pox has not left her quite pretty enough to become a soldier's bride, who, we all know, would expect her to fulfil her obligation had he fought a dozen battles, and been disfigured with as many scars, since the contract was formed.

Mary has positively commanded Edgar Levison to think of her no longer, and a great deal more stuff of that sort.

"Now we, who know the arduous necessity of keeping a man to his promise, will readily perceive how soon he would seize upon any excuse to leave his lady in the lurch; and such sentiments affirmed to be her's would almost make him think himself honourable in releasing her instantly from the fear of being encumbered with a husband.

"But there can be no necessity for pursuing this subject further, with one who has perceived long ago the justness of my remarks, and who would be the last person to uphold a daughter in disobedience towards the most confiding of mothers, if there were not a more weighty consideration—the loss *you* (of all people) will sustain in breaking off a match which would afford so excellent and pleasant a visiting-house as Mary will become mistress of.

"I give you full power, my dearest niece, to

destroy my daughter's letter, or, if you think best, to send it me, who, under either circumstance, will be perfectly satisfied.

"Frederick is not here, or I know he would *hardly* bear to be left out in our loves to you. I am sorry you can't be prevailed upon to come to the wedding. 'Twill be a very gay thing. A pity papa is such a martyr to his old complaint—retirement, &c. &c.

HESTER DE WINTER."

"I shall request papa to answer this letter for me."

"Wisely thought of, my blessing! Sweet Miss Mary! dear Miss Mary! A goodly spark has the old flint struck. May it never be put out, but kindle and grow to a fuller flame! My child's friend! I count thee noble, though thou hast some mean alliance; and now," said Nelly, embracing her darling, "brightness of my eyes, good night."



## CHAPTER V.

## 1.

They tell me that her cheek is pale as in the twilight hour  
 And that her eye has lost its light, her glance its form-  
 pow'r ;  
 But if her soul is still as chaste, still gentleness is there,  
 Then is her eye to me still bright, her cheek to me still  
 fair.

## 2.

For oh ! 'tis in the shrined soul where beauty purely dwell  
 Where virtue lives, and truth exists, like pearls in oyster  
 shells ;  
 Give me a feeling faithful heart, perfection's richest prize  
 This is the temple of all love, where beauty never dies.

DAKOTA

It was mid-day when Levison arrived in the  
 neighbourhood of Gwyn Dinas, and descending  
 from the vehicle that had borne him thus far, he  
 left the coach-road, and striking into the field

pursued an irregular course towards the Castle. His first impulse was happiness at being in the vicinity of his betrothed. Suddenly the recollection of her illness and its effects wrested his satisfaction from him, and in another moment, fear for the present state of her health took possession of his breast ; and he gazed from afar on that pile in agony of mind, supposing it might present a great mausoleum, rising over his hopes.

But it was unmanly he felt thus to forestall misery, and summoning fresh courage repaired his pace.

How to find Mary alone, and how to avoid her relations till his presence should be discovered to them through her agency, greatly perplexed him. He remembered this was Lady Hester's hour for a promenade on the terrace ; he recoiled from meeting her, as from something mysteriously dangerous to his advance, if not disagreeable to his presence, and resolutely determined to wait

the shades of evening ere he should venture onward.

Yet, at a great distance from his landmark, Levison bethought him to strike into one of the paths leading up the mountain, from whose summit, in summer days, with the brightest beings of his imagining, Mary and Edith Leslie, he had sketched views of Gwyn Dinas in its fairest point, and basked in the warmth of love and friendship that his gentle companions inspired. The leading-whither of every sheep-track was known to him, from the hawthorn bushes that marked particular ones, he had culled tender shoots for Mary's pony ; and the quaint figures of some that were bitten and cropped by the sheep, had given them mutual amusement. If a crow got up before him, he fancied it an old acquaintance, and the hare that crossed his path was the leveret he had pointed to Mary as it frolicked with its mother only the summer before.

The crags were close at hand, where he had surprised the cousins conversing about himself,

and overheard sentiments fall from Mary's lips that encouraged him to the avowal he finally made. With a panting breast he remembered that sacred hour, and notwithstanding the sneers of her hand-maid, misfortune, loved his mistress more and more.

Exhilarated by the contemplation of past joys, and hoping soon for their renewal to an endless term, he overcame the hill at a winged pace, and turned to view the difficulties he had surmounted. He stood to rest; the air seemed filled with voices, sad, yet melodious; a wild bee passed—it spoke he thought, or fairies surely welcomed him, and harebells waved, from whose purple domes this music came; still he listened, mindful to catch the tune.

This mountain was remarkable for the number of fairy rings (H) it exhibited, and on the same account held in high veneration by the Welsh peasantry, who were particularly partial to fairy lore, in which their legends abound. Many individuals of the neighbourhood professed to have

seen the good people; and to have doubted their veracity, or questioned the health of their senses, would be inflicting the gravest insult possible upon the community at large. Dames sung the deeds of elfin heroes, to inspire their sons with zeal for fame, and hushed their babies with promise of fairy guardianship; invisible troops presided at their wedding-feasts, and watched their tombs.

Levison was aware of this taste, and had learned much of the witching nation through Mary's teaching, whose early youth, spent among the wilds of her native place, gave her superstitious disposition opportunity and delight in the acquisition of fairy legends.

But Levison had no visual experience in these matters, and notwithstanding the precepts which had condemned curiosity, as temerity likely to be fatal to the experimentalist, Levison followed the sweet sounds round the crags, till, coming to a jutting rock that hindered his advance, in phrensy of interest he scaled the harsh obstacle, and lo!

before him stood—Mary—in bodily shape ! Levi-son became motionless ; her position awed him. Fear and passion in his soul elenched each other and were dreadfully still. The toe of her right foot pointed down the chasm, on the brink of which it rested ; a deep dark lake lay motionless several hundred feet beneath. With what purpose did Mary regard herself in its mirror ? Could human sight penetrate so vast a distance ?

Her left foot was drawn back, on which she principally supported herself, and one arm was thrown over her pony's head, whose black mane, tossed by the wind, mingled its shaggy tresses with her pale hair, that averse to its usual neatness, fell uncurled and loose. Her figure was attenuated, and cheek worn, yet was there poetry in her eye and in her attitude that touched her lover deeply. She had been singing he little doubted, and her's were the strains that charmed him hither. She was weeping ; he marked her tears roll down, till they fell clear into that slow pool ; and in fancy's imagery he thought the

Mary spoke.—  
—, and rash, not  
person assimilated  
termination to my  
bear my likeness no  
of dead flowers the  
head-stall. Mary  
“Withered, dry, as  
their species! So are  
No more fragrance  
the flowers for the d  
this. I am not wro  
—this grief, where  
only witness me.  
poory? or gather su  
thy taste? Thy min  
the leaves with her t

her of a hand thou likest better—lost to her and thee. The eagle that welcomed me when I came to Gwyn Dinas was over devoutly praised. I wist not he soared too high, and singed his plumes. Perchance I am wrong e'en now, nor rightly understand the omen; spurning all things below he directed me heavenward. This is a wholesome thought."

Levison longed to approach his Mary—to dry her tears—to quench her sorrow; but he dared not move, lest his sudden discovery might fright her, and she should slip from that awful brink.

With joy he saw her lead the pony to where a book lay that had been her study, and taking it, she prepared to descend the opposite side of the mountain.

Now was Edgar freed from restraint; he cleared the crags and followed her. She heard his footstep on the gritty path, and turning—became rivetted as the rock.

His arms bound her unyielding form.

"Won't you speak to me? nor return my



pressure? then have your words belied themselves—  
—or I saw not, nor heard aright."

He loosed her from his embrace.

"Can you love me still?" she said, looking full  
in his face: "behold! my symmetry is gone."

"Mary, Mary! when thou wast yet a child  
and nought appeared for sensual man to feast  
upon, I loved the budding beauties of thy soul."

She held out her hand to him; she no longer  
resisted his affectionate advance, but repaid his

endearments with all a woman's tenderness.  
Now were they happy, and indeed blessed. Now  
was their love refined, for bereft of the dross—  
the false ornament fleshly nature takes pride in.

The morning previous to her meeting with  
Levison, Mary discovered to her mother the part  
she had acted, and was from that moment shut  
out from Lady Hester's favour, whose displeasure  
knew no bounds. Mary had not since mixed with  
her family, but spent the time in her room, or in  
lonely visits to haunts hallowed by the presence  
to her mind of objects sadly dear, with whom she

once enjoyed the same prospect, and held delicious converse.

When Lady Hester saw Mary advancing up the avenue, accompanied by Levison, whom she believed lost game, and hoped scarcely to redeem should fortune speed her instant letter to Edith; not satisfied with her unassisted organs (which were of the keenest order) she applied a glass, worn either for show, or its legitimate use; but in the London world she found serviceable in distancing people she wished to avoid, who, if they attempted to claim acquaintance, desiring to be remembered as Mr. or Mrs. or Miss So-and-so—Lady Hester invariably raised her *cutting-glass*; and surveying the party with the most innocent amazement: “Indeed! I did not remember you.”

The same implement engaged her hand when it was her pleasure to reserve it from the touch of intimacy. Various were the ways in which she employed this little instrument, but never in such a cause as to-day, when she wished it had telescopic powers, and should bring the features of

Mary's lover closer to her view, and convince her it was really he.

As soon as she was sufficiently satisfied of the fact, casting aside dignity as too cumbrous for her person, with the portentous news she bore, Lady Hester actually ran from the terrace to the drawing-room, and allowing the doors in her haste to slam, one by one after her, communicated the joyful intelligence to the half annihilated Miss Dorothea, and her stately sister, when her

bosom friends became reconciled to Lady Hester's departure from sobriety; they imprisoned each one of that lady's hands, and wished her equal fortune in her future prospects. One took a reticule, that had been laid aside, from between two folds of silver paper, and busied herself in its completion. The other arranged a paper pattern beneath a cambric handkerchief she had commenced embroidering, and both were earnest in their preparations for the wedding, and loud in their expressions of satisfaction.

Mary had not a thought to trouble her till the

arrival of Alaric Elphinstone—Levison's friend. She wondered two such dissimilar spirits should agree so well as to have acquired the habit of calling each other by a title thus familiar. Both were young—Levison of fair complexion, gay, and frank—Elphinstone dark, as his name well suited, raven-haired, and coal-black, mysterious eyes; grave and reserved in his manners, and taller than his companions; he was thought extremely handsome by all—all but Mary; she could see no beauty in a feature of one whose character had undergone so naked and ghastly an exposure to her view; besides original depravity, she found more against him—his having unsettled her beloved Edith's heart. Mary hated Edgar's friend, whilst in this one thing she seemed to think her lover had fallen into grievous error.

She longed to warn him of his dangerous alliance, but Josephine's secret was not her's to confide.

Whilst respecting the devotion which suggested the opinion, that a wife ought not to withhold a thought from her husband, this was an instance in which Mary must object to avowal, feeling she was unfit to receive the confidence of another who was unable to guard her trust. She relied upon other means for dissuading her husband from an intimacy, which if not raised upon mutual respect could have no foundation of real strength.

In conversing about his friend, Levison observed Mary's disaffection to the subject, and one day asked her reason. She replied, "I have formed a dislike to your friend, dear Edgar, I fear I shall never get over; you may think me whimsical; you know me to be superstitious; but I cannot divest myself of the idea there is something condemned in his look."

"Poor fellow!" said Levison, laughing, "he is out of health and out of spirits just now, but I can assure you, he is in general a very great favourite with the ladies."

"This last trait does not exalt him in my favour."

"Then must the goddess of love and beauty be impeached for gracing her favourite thus, and giving an art to him that other young men sigh, and sigh in vain, to win. He is highly educated, of an accomplished mind, and great natural ability. They look upon him in the house as a man of parts and promise; he is a profound linguist, and besides French, speaks most of the continental languages fluently; and sings like an Italian nightingale."

"Perhaps I am devoid of taste, but a singing man is to me an effeminate object."

"You would change your opinion the instant you heard Elphinstone. His voice has never been artificially cultivated, nor would he discover his talent were you seven years in his company, unless some one, by dint of urging, brought him out; and then to please, not to display, is his aim. He has almost won me over to their bands, when he sings the wild forest melodies,

reward our a

"As we al  
never doubt

What is the :  
hero of thir  
your hesitati  
rain marks th  
with the kiss

"I fear m  
deep reader  
covered what  
You have con  
for this I beli  
ble one, as  
thought Elph  
a charming p

"Edith Le  
man united !

Mary could scarcely conceal her horror at the supposition.

“Don’t mistake me, dearest ! I would not for kingdoms that your Edith and this friend of mine (to whom I may have been too partial) should be united under existing suspicions, were it even possible that he could win her affections ; but in truth I am glad there is no chance of their meeting ; for knowing Elphinstone’s fascinating qualities, I should tremble for Edith’s present peace of mind, and ultimate happiness with one so fickle as I believe him to be. I feel and think that a heart young and fair as her’s should be tenderly used, nor given to one incapable of esteeming rightly so rich a treasure ; and to fall in love with mere external beauty is no compliment to the mistress, nor is it in my opinion the most likely charm for insuring that husband’s devotion ; he who seeks ornament for its sole sake does a senseless, not so selfish, an act as some suppose. A lady to head his table is the study of some men, who having procured this,



attraction, I cannot  
enjoy to a degree

“Come, come,  
you depreciate me  
selfish man, Mary  
arm-in-arm, I cannot  
the vales of life,  
me as I go. Love  
name, given to me  
whim, and mistakes  
repeat, I have a right  
overcome by it.”

“Yet is not this  
Mary, “or I could  
There are some faces  
expressive of the  
affection may be true  
Some countenances

and devotion of which the human breast is capable. I was her slave upon her first acquaintance, and could excuse any man for the like feeling."

At this juncture of their conversation, Frederick, who had been hourly expected, having arrived, sought eagerly for Mary, and put a letter into her hand. Freed from the supposition of Edgar Levison being Edith's lover, and finding no resting-place for the little bilious god, he in buoyant spirits descanted upon the many charms of his lovely cousin, with a zeal of which none of his relatives had believed him possessed. He spoke of having passed on his way home, four enchanted days at Malvern—"the rest day, the drest day, the prest day," and the squeezed day, vowing he never spent so happy a visit in his existence, and told, with no small pride, that he managed to keep sober the whole time. He concluded by intimating to Levison he was now ready to do the last office for him, which he cordially wished was over, for the sake of all parties. "Yet why should I be so forward to

with such a wry fa-  
dress is offered t  
profess admiration  
into such a dilemm

"Now, my dear f  
his hand with a p  
son's shoulder, " a  
pray proceed with  
too much. I can'  
It would kill me ou  
know of such an o  
and-twenty hours b  
married without the  
sonal declaration to  
and signing a warn  
I never grieved so n  
I have just lost in th  
"What! is Cha

Emma, who with her mother approached to learn the news.

"He verily is—poor creature!"

"To how much?" said Lady Hester; "he talked so covetously of money that I presume he has made a good thing of it."

"Alack! no," whispered de Winter, careful the Misses Macklin should not hear him, "Charley sacrificed himself to an old girl, with just so much gold as encircled her false tooth."

"The stupid owl," observed Emma.

"I hoped better things for him," remarked Lady Hester, shaking her head in sorrow.

"Yes! he has put down his horse to keep a lap-dog for his wife—dismissed his valet, to meet the additional expense of a dog-comber."

"I never heard of such a domestic," said Emma.

"My lady's maid, to be sure," replied Frederick, "and the puppy's provider."

"Lady Baldrige! have you nothing to tell us about her manner of demise, Frederick? Was

she not at the same pic-nic you attended the day of her drowning? She was excruciatingly rich; her death made quite a sensation; every one is dying to know who inherits her lacs of rupees. I understand, romping with the steersman, she so got overboard. I have heard after a little champagne she was quite unmanageable. Some say she would row, and took the oars from the boatmen; as may be easily imagined, she did not understand the craft, and sank herself and party; they were all lost."

"You are wrong, Emma! I saw the whole thing, and must be allowed to know best. Lady Baldrige, bedecked and bedizened as usual, sat there like a figure-head; some unaccountable how or other, the boat upset, and notwithstanding every effort made to save her by the gentlemen (I actually took off my gloves!) poor lady B., weighed down with jewels, sank to rise no more—*alone*; her next appearance being in the company of a boat-hook, dexterously entwined in one

of her gold chains. The verdict given on the occasion was—'died of a diamond necklace.' "

"A shocking accident," laughed Lady Hester and Emma together.

Mary and Levison looked at one another, and sympathized in the pain each experienced, through being compelled to remain in company so uncongenial to their tastes; but to retreat just now would expose them to individual chastisement from their love of quizzing, that Emma and Frederick sought every opportunity of exercising.

"You know, F., that Lord Staunton and Lady Clarissa had a son born at Rome."

"What! a little Roman cement? this reminds me that Mrs. Maberly has had a relapse."

"Another girl?"

"Yes, poz; and as you know how consoling I am at times, meeting her husband at the club, I told him he was determined not to give himself heirs."

"I like Mrs. Maberly," said Miss Macklin, approaching; "not as some of your fine ladies

does she delegate to another the interesting task of providing nourishment for her progeny."

"The horrid little snipes! if I ever became an unfortunate married man, I should have every one brought up cuckoo fashion, or in other words put out to nurse."

"Mr. Frederick! I am ashamed of you; and now pray explain what resemblance a minute human animal bears to a snipe; one clearly of the ornithological species."

"They both live by suction, so I have been given to understand, Miss Macklin."

"Is't a baby you are talking of? the cherub!" said Miss Dorothea, "I adore it! Do you remember Mrs. Barnet's little son? When they were staying here, how I used to dance and dandle it! Alas! poor dear, sweet, interesting, blighted flower! he's dead that loved me! and used to come to me before any one—a pretty boy, Archy!"

"Begging your pardon a million times, Miss Dorothea, but the straight and dingy crop just

covering his head, with the vulgar features of the child, combined to give him the appearance of an infant Jack Sheppard."

"You have no taste, Mr. Frederick."

"Not in baby-flesh, certainly."

"Barbarous man!"

"To sum up the measure of my inorthodoxy, I hope Mrs. Maberly, whose motherly performance you seem to admire, will have left off her baby before she pays us a visit, for I abominate the little squeakers. I met Mr. Tierney in Town, —your friend, Miss Macklin."

"What does he talk about that's new? What science does he affect? To be brief—how does he stand in the literary world?"

"Oh! he talks so much of the human understanding, he may truly be said to have a lock-jaw. By the way, lest I forget it, his brother Toby is married and gone into the country to spend the treacle moon. James is stark mad upon phrenology and mesmerism, and I conclude under the influence of manipulation of one kind or another,



from morning till night. The instant he saw me, he told me I was a married man. I thanked him for apprizing me of what I did not know before. Talking of the bumpy science, what a bumpous country this is! the bump of locality is most strongly developed."

"Ah! phrenology, I must study its intricacies; the only objection I make to either of the two mentioned sciences," remarked Miss Macklin, "the one is, the delicacy I feel in submitting my head to the hands of a man; the other to receiving an exposition of my thoughts from a stranger. Very tender situations—both of these."

"Very so, indeed, Miss Macklin; inconvenient, to say the least." Frederick insinuated aside to his mother, that a wig was in the way of one, and he would not say what fierce notions of love engaged her delicate bosom.

"I have a little news for you, dear Miss Dorothea," said Frederick, addressing himself to this lady, whose mode of beguiling the cold world of

its chill was betrayed on the top of her most prominent feature ; " a panacea for the cure of multiplied diseases of nerve and sinew ; the hydraulic has superseded all other life preservers, being found to prolong life by lengthening the breathing. My father ought to know this, besides sundry other ways of renovating exhausted nature. A commodious and yet portable bath is an essential part of the furniture of the very smallest house, and the patient is advised to remain in it morning, mid-day, noon, and night—drinking, and living in and upon the rustic element until cured."

" Better never to be ill at all," said Emma, observing the blank expression of Miss Dorothea's face.

" The life insurance office likes the plan desperately, and has given a considerable fee to the discoverer ; this is a great secret. The tenacity of life of frogs, although cut up in little bits, suggested the cold water system, upon which little animals daily experiments are made with the

view of improving yet further upon their experience. Some of our friends have discharged town, or, more intelligibly, run out of their capital, in both senses—the money one, and the city one—to file up bills at Paris, Brussels, &c. &c. &c. The young ladies, after dancing through the season, are taken into the country to be turned out to grass, with as much necessity as the horses that have foundered their legs on the pavement, which is being mended in all parts of the empty town, and get ready for the spring harvest.”

The day after the arrival of Frederick, whom Lady Hester installed master of the ceremonies, Mary, passive in the hands of her relatives, submitted to be dressed according to their taste, and in bridal costume met her future husband before the altar, where in solemn worship she knelt, commending herself to the notice of the first and best of all her friends. His blessing she there solicited, and earnestly prayed to have preserved to herself and beloved partner.

That ceremony, which to most young ladies in

the gay world, is a season of vain emulation in pompous array, was to Mary de Winter one of serious moment, and fulfilled with chaste devotion. Tears had fled her eyes since Levison's return, and on this day, when she rose from her knees, a happy smile greeted her husband. Mary had no regret in leaving home; and when the customary formalities were concluded, and Lady Hester had strained her to her breast with most theatrical effect, and the nearest members of her family, with the Misses Macklin, had severally saluted the bride, Mary in fond confidence gave her hand to her husband, who, assisting her into his carriage, she quitted the home of her youth, neither a sad nor a discontented bride. For several miles the peasantry came out from their cottages and blessed Miss Mary as she passed, as they still persisted in calling her; some wept at losing one from amongst them who had ever been a refuge and comfort in trouble.

Mary's father, who really loved her, restrained his emotion till she was gone, when alternately

wobbling and laughing, he rejoiced in the happiness, and mourned the absence of his little girl—his best nurse and playmate; declared Levison was the rarest fellow in the world, and condemned him for robbing his nest of the darling.

Lady Hester exulted in the four splendid greys and outriders that had dashed through her gates—her daughter's property and her own pride! She had congregated the élite of the country to attend the wedding, and witness her triumph, and wonder what should follow so bright a beginning; for if this, her plainest, her youngest daughter had made a match thus excellent, surely nothing beneath a refulgent coronet should embrace the brows of the elder—the beauty—the favourite! That the handsome Elphinstone with whom she flirted, and before whom, in the church, she hung her head, and even dropped tears at witnessing the affecting ceremony—this young man was a toy for the moment, but should certainly be superseded by a bauble lordling.

The arrival of Lord Charmouth, whilst every

one was ruminating upon the events of the morning, and the splendid dejeuner, confirmed the suspicions of some, blew out to a toad's proportions the envy of others, and hastened the departure of the vanquished from the field of glory Lady Hester generalled, with her select band of beaux, namely—Lord Charmouth, the romantic Elphinstone, and rich Squire Barrett.

Grousing on the hills engaged the gentlemen's mornings, and late wine and light love-speeches filled up the evening.

Elphinstone sauntered through the woods and green fields in his attendance upon Miss de Winter, but ever gave way at the approach of Lord Charmouth. Neither of these (the juniors of the male assembly, and imperfectly seasoned) could endure the same quantity of wine Barrett, Frederick, and Mr. Jones imbibed; and Lord Charmouth bore his little the worst; but was, on this account, a superior favourite with Emma, who preferred the increased familiarity of the boyish noble to the cool musings of the cavalier.

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certainty o

Lady H  
ter's pros  
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but she  
Lady Hes  
day previc  
breaking v  
mined he  
affair to a

She su  
boudoir, v  
Charmout

The lad  
leaving th  
ant spirits

Irish, and drank a toast to his neighbours across the channel. Lady Hester laboured long to do away with this barbarous custom, but on the same subject Mr. Jones borrowed the vivacity of the cloudless element, and vowed she might as well lop off the hand that took it to his mouth, or turn the course of his throat.

Jack Barrett loved Mary in the same self-sacrificing way he did his horses and other goods, of which his many friends plundered him at discretion. Few regretted more sincerely the illness which succeeded her engagement to Levison; he was again ready to offer to take her himself should the soldier fail in his duty; and when he visited Gwyn Dinas he never forgot to inquire for the invalid; at the same time requesting this attention on his part should not be made known to her, whom, when recovered, he approached with the greatest respect and deference; and when married, in generous bluntness came forward, and holding out his hand: "Won't you give me your's, Miss Mary, and say good-bye to



your own and your gallant husband's well-wisher? and may you live long to praise your choice!" A kind-heartedness that both bride and bridegroom acknowledged as frankly.

Jack Barrett expressed himself highly pleased with the whole thing, and seldom resisted an allusion to it when he was happiest, which was in the mean time between after dinner and the drawing-room retiring hour. This reminded him of sundry anecdotes, as entirely foreign to the subject as could be imagined, but all expressive of his humour, and with which he regaled his hearers.

The night in question he was particularly facetious, and Frederick had not much pains in urging on his friends to a certain mark he made in his own mind; for they were so interested in Barrett's relations, they filled glass after glass as an accompaniment, without having dull time enough to consider what they were about. When Jack flagged, Frederick prompted, and set him off upon another tack. At length Barrett became

exhausted. Frederick saw with disappointment that Charmouth was not wound up to the turn, and foraging in his memory, suddenly reminded the squire that Tickle was expected on shore; upon which Barrett declared he would give them a stave at his friend's expense.

“It was the making a marr of him, though quite a little chap, and but just joined! ‘How dare you quit the ship without leave,’ said his captain to him, when drenched and half drowned he gained the deck after having tumbled overboard. Hard upon this, during his first voyage, he was sent with a boat's crew to get water on the coast of America. The seamen, not minding the presence of a child of eleven, decided upon running the boat on shore, and deserting up the country. Our middy ordered them to pull back to the ship; on refusal he shot one dead, and presented his pistol at another. In peril of their lives they sped the oars, and presently were gently ironed on board the vessel.

"Another time Tickle got leave to go to Ireland to see his sweetheart, whose acquaintance he made when the Corbie lay to in the harbour of Cove. As the steamer was bound up the river for Cork's own town, when in the mouth, out came boats to take passengers to the island. Tickle agreed with one fellow for five shillings, and leaped into the craft; the boatmen seeing the hurry my friend was in, after a few strokes rested on his oars, and asked a pound for the job. Finding expostulation vain, Tickle demanded, "can you swim?"

"No."

"Then pull for your life," said he, at the same instant drawing the plug from the bottom of the boat. When within a hundred yards of the shore, the boat sank, and the sailor was with difficulty saved. A wet jacket was better to Tickle than an empty pocket, and Blink had taught the youngster to take care of himself. As I showed you before, as I have not so sure a seat on the sea-horse as my friend Tickle, who

despises the land-animal with no small reason, I'll tell you a story he is sure to spout, if his skill in horsemanship is impeached.

"Say I have no comrades ! wait and you'll see a crab and a land lobster walk arm-in-arm. Only listen to me." As the best part of him is Irish he takes leave to talk in this way sometimes.

"An infantry-sub, whom his father made his own aide-de-campe, was initiated under the following circumstances. A horse, usually quiet, was saddled for the field with the addition of a crupper, which had never before formed part of its caparison, and on this occasion arranged to keep the saddle off its shoulder, which was low. The A. D. C. attending on his general with an orderly in his rear, advanced to the ground where several regiments were drawn up for inspection. The slope of a hill caused the saddle to slip forward, which being a heavy regimental one, bore hard upon the horse's tail ; accordingly he raised both heels in the air, and the A. D. C. was prostrated upon its neck, which he embraced

with a fond pressure. The cocked hat became entangled in its headpiece, and the long feather hung down between its ears, like the tournament horses of old. The tails of the young gentleman's coat were reversed on his shoulders, and the sword pointing to his head, lay longitudinally upon his back; unable to regain his seat, and unwilling to proceed further from it, (as may be supposed,) he was a ridiculous object to the assembled hosts; a volley of laughter burst from the ranks, the orderly's red moustache twisted over his capacious mouth, and the general's horse took fright at the reiterated shouts of merriment proceeding from its rider, who had some difficulty in pulling him up after a pretty sharp run.

"This very general, as gallant a soldier as ever won laurels, nor shuddered at a red winding sheet, and settled into peace with a star on his breast—the other day mounted wigged (for he let his youth and chesnut locks on the battle-field a new plume in his cocked hat—sallied forth to

inspect his men. The troops saluted their commander. In the plenitude of his power and pride, with a pompous flourish, he raised the hat from his head. Alas ! the wig adhered to its partner in dress ; the grace of the best bow he had ever attempted was lost ; the cocked hat descended with undignified haste, and the troops, not daring to give vent to their feelings, looked desperately stiff in their leather collars, whilst the officers shielded their faces with the blades of their swords.

“Desirous others should be up to their duty as he was before-hand in his, he chastened rather severely the departures from discipline of the officer-recruits, and whilst the sub was yet smarting under reprimand, our general would seek him with, “where’s the young gentleman I complimented just now?” and as the culprit came forward, fearing more than he had yet received, the fine old fellow would bid him to dinner at his house with a host’s cordiality.

“The adventures this wig brought upon its

master, the general, were various. One of these I will tell.

"Upon a fine Sunday morning, studiously attired, our friend, with a beautiful girl leaning on his arm, approached the church; doffing his hat in the porch, he required both hands for the due arrangement of his surmounting ornament—a close shaven wig—like the back of a clipped black horse, and of rather curtailed dimensions.

"This feat he soon accomplished, and plunging through the crowd thought he overtook his niece; and insinuating his elbow in her ribs, shook his head at her, asking, "how is brown bob?" An involuntary scream, and the terrified gaze of a strange face, warned him of an unfortunate mistake, and muttering something meant for an apology, discomfited he retraced his way in search of his young relative."

Frederick de Winter noticed Charmouth's hand shake as he poured out the last glass, and fearing he should be disabled before the prize was won, warned him to take a little fresh air, as

Lady Hester expected to see them all sober and steady in the drawing-room.

Charmouth rose from his seat, and drinking off his glass, sung out an original rhyme inspired by the genial fluid :

“Though thrown in a pond, I would never get drowned ;  
For I’d drink, and I’d drink till my feet touched the ground  
—declared the door was as difficult to find as the  
30th of February, and left the room midst  
shouts of applause.

About half-an-hour after this, Frederick got up, and taking Elphinstone’s arm, conducted him from the apartment, proposed a turn in the cool, and a look out for Charmouth. Dragging Elphinstone along, rather than suiting himself to his friend’s pace, Frederick led the way through intricate paths, as if seeking Charmouth where he knew he would be found.

They came abruptly upon a bower ; and seated before them—his arm encircling her waist, her head resting on his breast, appeared Charmouth and Miss de Winter !



Emma seemed confused at the discovery : "Oh Philip ! my love ! my life !"

"Wife !" whistled Frederick, pretending to have been taken by surprise, and endeavouring to get as fast out of sight as possible, but not before his sister had, pointing with her hand, directed Lord Charmouth's attention to the group.

"Look there, Philip !" she screamed, and saw him lifeless in his arms.

Brotherly love, the solicitude of friendship commanded Frederick and Elphinstone to rush to her assistance ; and the three gentlemen bore her home ; taking care the greater part of the weight should fall to Charmouth's share.

When they reached the house, and Frederick had confided his sister to her maid's attention and conducted the gentleman back to the drinking-room, he sought Lady Hester, and rubbing his hands, declared Charmouth was their man and could no more back out of the business than a snail leave its shell. He had taken Elphinstone

stone, who was cloudy, to be a witness; he had adroitly translated "life" into "wife," and to-night he would engage the young fellow while his heart was in his head, before morning should clear the upper story.

Accordingly, "what are your intentions, my lord, with regard to my sister?" elicited, "honourable, most honourable. F—F—your are down upon me. I, I, I am a gentleman, and honour is the soul of a gentleman."

A shake of the head, and Elphinstone called again to bear witness that Charmouth's intentions were honourable towards his sister, who should shortly become his well-beloved wife, left the party concerned too much confounded for utterance.

Happy, thrice happy man! Charmouth must have sung, had he compared his situation with that of many others. He had no cause for agitation; his road to matrimony was macadamized; he had no question to pop; it was popped to him, and saved him a world of uneasiness and



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## CHAPTER VI.

And awful eyes ; never had earth  
To their fearful wanderings given birth ;  
Their light and their haunting darkness came  
From gazing on those it is sin to name.  
She spoke, it was low, but it sank on the soul  
With deadlier force than the thunder's roll.

L. E. L.

Thinking her darling child might have inherited her mother's constitution, gave the fond Nelly no rest, night nor day. This apprehension increased with every visit she received from Edith, who, when flushed, she fancied marked by the disease—when pale, certainly delicate and liable to its encroachment. At length, fearing to raise her nursling's suspicions by going to Malvern to

consult her father, she made an appointment for Mr. Leslie at her own cottage, whither hamlet business might be supposed to take him. The conversation that ensued from this meeting was of a nature exquisitely distressing to both. Although Nelly in the gentlest way expressed her care, this was quite enough to renew all Mr. Leslie's grief, that with increased violence agitated every nerve in his frame. The loss of her mother had been death to his youth, his hopes, his health and spirits; his body had long lain unburied; should Edith be taken too, it must speedily fill a grave. The old man's eye was almost set; his face grew rigid—the thought had nearly slain him.

Mr. Bourne, a herald of health, came in at this dreadful crisis, and sitting down by his friend, took his stiffened hand, and cheered him with heavenly rays of warmth and light; and it was an enchanting sight to see the influence such counsels had upon him, whom despair had almost driven to forgetfulness of the Eternal Being on

which his building rested. Soon three worshippers were there ; each asked favour for an absent dear one, and rose prepared, in calm trustfulness, to pursue the course providence suggested to reason. All agreed change of air and scene would benefit Edith most ; and Nelly selected Bright-helmstone, both on account of its salubrity, and that her darling had often expressed a wish to see the place her mother spoke of with greatest pleasure ; that was a fishing hamlet in her recollection, and whose cliffs and rocks were wild, and suited the ocean breakers.

Although far away from Devonshire, Mr. Leslie hesitated not a single moment in determining that Brighton should be their destination.

Edith was pleased with her father's proposal to visit Brighton, and hoped this might lead in a great measure to the recovery of his spirits. She never suspected the true cause of his taking such a journey, and was the more readily inclined to look upon it as a proof her dear papa had not entirely lost his physical energy. She prepared

with cheerfulness for the route, though anxious she should soon behold her parent's favourite spot. What hallowed places the sight would bring to her mind.

On the day before their departure, Mr. M sent Edith in the carriage to bid farewell to Willoughby, whom he had previously acquainted with all their plans, and received her assurances—strengthened and facilitated by offering her a house, which was situate on the outskirts of the town; and what Edith prized most of all, her housekeeper to provide a certain passage should open a subterranean passage to the shore, where her young friend, in perfect privacy, might pass many unmolested hours and breathe a wholesome breeze.

Lady Willoughby having, for some time, noticed Edith's altered features and manner, was readily willing to attribute the change to a decline of health, and recalled the love this beautiful creature inspired at her first acquaintance, but which had greatly declined of late; for

could not confide her secret to the relative of him she dreaded ; and this occasion for reserve, put restraint upon every future meeting that increased to pain on Edith's part—observing the delicacy of Lady Willoughby's feelings, and being thus disabled from explaining her motives.

After Lady Willoughby had embraced her, and with renewed tenderness wished her a prosperous journey, Edith departed with a full heart and overflowing eyes. When alone again, she whispered to herself, “ Lady Willoughby might be my friend ; oh, why should *he* take her from me ? I dare not satisfy my craving—I must be content with those I have, and sure I am rich in them. Mary, my love ! thou art happy, and I will strive to be happy too.”

Upon her return towards Malvern, and within half a mile of Nelly's cottage, Edith alighted, purposing to walk the rest of the way, and send the carriage home. This was on a road we have had occasion to mention once before, running from the hamlet of Rochelle, along the sea-coast,



bounded on one side with vast cliffs, on the other by broad sands and the interminable ocean.

The equipage was soon out of sight, and Edith, with her faithful attendant, Meteor, journeyed on foot. They had not proceeded far, when, at a little distance before her, she perceived a half-naked figure issue from the cliffs; one or two others came forth, and as suddenly disappeared. She hesitated to advance, and feared to retreat. She looked to Meteor for comfort; he wagged his tail, and seemed in no way disturbed by what his quick eye could not fail to have seen. Presently a low whistle was heard, and the dog, setting his ears, darted forward, and behind the same rock as the forms she had seen had vanished, Meteor was lost to sight.

Without a guard, without a guide, Edith's situation was truly deplorable; yet she did not faint nor lose her courage, but stood for a while to establish it. Presently the dog rewarded her eager eyes; he came gamboling forward, apparently satisfied with the visit he had made. Here

was some one Meteor knew. Edith must pass this way, or return to the grove, along a road more dangerous every step she removed from the village. Taking a desperate resolution she approached the spot. A man came out—he was a wretched-looking creature in the face, but better dressed than is usual with the gipsy gang. Joyfully Edith recognised Owenee the cowherd; he went down on his hands and knees, (as was his wont) and hiding his head from the “bright morning,” as he called her, in a whining voice: “There’s one a dying here, and she’s my mother, sweet lady! pretty lady! Come and help her, and Owenee will be the way. ’Tisn’t far up the glen—a big secret holds her breath—she’ll lose it to thee, and have a berth above in air that’s lively, and skies that’s lightsome. But she can’t get up unless you lets her.”

“Owenee!” said Edith, in astonishment, “I never knew you had a mother living.”

“I’ll eat up the ground till there be none left, and then I’ll look for more,” said Owenee, “if

I'm not telling the naked truth, without a rag upon it, as my poor relatives are before this daylight's presence; and she's dying—she's dying, ochone! ochone! the doctor is near, but he won't go in;" and the poor creature sung, and wept, and groaned. Notwithstanding this strange discovery, her confidence in Owenee, whose character for honesty was abroad as extraordinary in such a half-witted creature, inclined Edith to believe his report, that for some strange freak he had not discovered before; and desirous of mitigating the sufferings of a fellow creature, she again faced danger and uncertainty.

Owenee seemed instantly to forget his sorrow, and with the flexibility of character peculiar to him, frisked like a wild Indian in his most extravagant mood, and played with Meteor, to whom he addressed a rambling conversation, persuaded every word was understood and appreciated by the sagacious animal; whilst the dog bore with him—as some wise dogs have been seen to do with children and puppies.

In this style, Owenee led the way along a narrow opening in the cliffs, that had evidently formed the bed of a torrent, now dry. They traced this some distance, then a narrow but worn path at the side that gradually ascended in a zig-zag direction ; the depth increased, and it was dizzy to look down ; when abruptly the whole party came to a stand upon the edge of a precipitous rock, and their path was at an end.

The stream had taken a turn in this direction, and it appeared had cleft the rock through which it took its winter course. The opposite side showed a beaten track, but it was thus fearfully divided.

Edith gazed terrified at her situation. Owenee made a motion to fling himself into the gulf. Edith shrieked ; but ere she had time to stay his purpose, he caught the opposite angle of the rock, and holding the first with his naked feet, called upon her to cross. There was no time for deliberation ; she saw his face blacken with the exertion, and stepping lightly over this human bridge,

arrived at the other side. Ere she recovered sufficiently to look for her strange guide, Owence shot past her, and proceeded in the same wild way as before. A little further Edith perceived a level piece of ground, whereon were pitched two tents.

The ground rose slightly behind the encampment and presented the level top of the ridge of crags, where browsed some shaggy donkeys. From one of the tents, which was covered with smoked canvass in a very dilapidated condition, streamed a long red rag.

"That's mother's," said Owence, in a whisper—"the queen's court palace."

From the other a man's head was thrust; he wore a long silver beard, and hair descending on his shoulders.

"He's naked a'most, or he'd welcome my sweet lady; but seeing the weather's warm, where's the difference? There's one more in the camp, and he's natural too."

They were before the entrance of the superior

tent; Edith bent down to look within, whilst Owenee crawled upon all fours.

A female was stretched upon the ground; he shouted in her ear, and leaving Edith waiting for the result of this rude mode of waking his mother, joined the remainder of the party at the lesser tent.

"Did I dream? is that you, Owenee?" she said in sepulchral accents, opening her eyes as from a deadly sleep; whilst Meteor, apparently well pleased to see the woman, licked her face and bare arms.

"A strange connection has the dog with this mysterious band," thought Edith, as she examined curiously the inmate of this wretched abode. She was a shrivelled hag, and deeply sunburnt; the crown of her head was bald, and round it her hair, grey and crisp, rose like ashes from a funeral pile, giving to her whole presence a strange unnaturalness. Her eye-brows were still black, and a moustache of the same colour surrounded the hollow mouth. She groaned as if

suffering pain; by degrees she raised her eyes from Edith's feet to her waist, and when they reached her face, she started to a sitting posture.

Edith would have fled, but the woman, seizing by her dress, drew her into the tent.

"Be not alarmed, my pretty bird! I have good things to offer ye; a good warning to give ye, and a dying confession to make."

Edith trembling, crouched under the low roof.

"They tell me I have not long to live, I know that same, I feel the panting dog is near." She put her hand to her throat and squeezed it.

"My pipe minds me I want thy blessing, and I will have it; ye shan't deny me," turning a ferocious look upon Edith; "the cow's breath of innocence will heal my soul; they used to call me mad, and now I am their queen; I pleased them, and flattered their fortunes when I told them. I am a jewel now. I was a stone kicked out of the way before. Lady mild! fear me not, I am harmless. I have hands, but I don't bite—my teeth are gone." She mumbled with a vacant

smile, looking from one miserable palm to another, and examining severally each finger-tip, "my nails are broken—I can't claw you either. I used to pare them sharp with a shiny scissors when my enemies dared me; but I have outlived them all!" she laughed, "and you are not my enemy."

"I would be your friend, and help you," Edith soothingly replied, hoping to calm the poor maniac.

"You have a sweet voice, dear! hast ever heard of Judy Reardon?"

Edith started.

"The bonnie Judy! here am I! blown from my own country by the foul winds of slander and sorrow and slight—I took me up the gipsey line—north, south, east and west I've been, in this roomy land. I was starving. I found your mother here. I threw my born twins in her way; she took one and I blessed her; she sent the other to the poor-house; he was idle and mischievous," she said, and I cursed her, and vowed



I'd be revenged. I cursed you for her sake, but I'll requite ye yet. It was a misdeed, and I repent. Ye think perhaps I killed her; she would have died. I marked her cheek long before. That night she knew my voice, and it startled her; this beast knows it too—it does not frighten him. Hah, I wist with what oil to anoint me, when I woo the secret hour and the dark night, and haunt widower's homes. He has not since wound the clock that stands his opposite.

See, here's the key! 'tis gold and jewelly with an hour-glass seal. He'll 'member it—he'll 'member me! but you must not give it him till in another place. You're going hence to-morrow; but this is not all. I cursed you—you—your own very self, when thou wast by thy mother's side."

Edith with speechless horror listened.

"Thou wast troubled for't; thou had'st a lover, well seeming to behold, but dangerous to touch. To look at that man is sin—to think of him is death. My daughter!" she cried, catching Edith

by the arm, "this I will tell thee for thy safety—I would do thee service at the last. Not long ago thou sawest him, and was like to love him; nay, deny me not, I know thou wast. A child came in my way—I was wicked, and stole the babe for his necklace; here it is, I render all back to thee—and this!"

She held a small gold case in her hand; "his face that thou knowest—wilt view his face once more?"

"No," said Edith, checking her hand, and closing the clasp.

"The child's father?"

"The same. I charge thee, lady, discover to no one what thou here hast seen and heard—'twould go ill with me, who am not long for above ground. Learn from my poor witless one to keep a secret the same mother gives thee. It went ill with Michael Reardon when he forgot the issue of the witch of the Cairn—himself, his babes suffered sore. I am her daughter—mark

my words—keep my request for a month—no more. I'll free ye then."

"Can I relieve you? May I send a good man to comfort you?"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the hag, "away! away!" she beckoned Edith to begone. Edith stayed: "Hear me! oh, do hear me, and let me add to forgiveness of the grievous wrongs you have done the child; let her impart what her sweet mother taught, and learn thee to join thy hands in prayer that never knew so sacred a purpose."

Tears streamed from Edith's eyes, as beseechingly she leaned towards the withered one.

The same laugh and "away! away!" proceeded from the poor maniac. Edith dropped her purse midst the rags in which the woman lay, and in despair left the hovel.

"Ye'll never tell on mammy, will ye? lady dear!" said Owenee, when Edith was once again on her road home, "'twould be the body-stiffening of Corny, my biggest brother, and Mike the

father's son. Into prison they'd get, and never know any more how to walk like free men, and all for mother's sake that stole the wean, ochone!" wept Owenee. "I shan't see my first mother again till my last mother takes me sweetly to her side."

"Have you two mothers?" asked Edith.

He pointed significantly to the earth—then whispered mysteriously: "Corny told me now, I never knew before, the why mammy moved her nest from far away where she carried the lamb to shear—'twas very because some one, no one knew the one, took the prize out of her old claws, and she feared the jackals might come, and clear away his leavings. Though nearer their lair, they can't where she is to-night, and they may look up in the skies for her to-morrow, wisha, wisha! sore is me! I kissed good bye to mammy a while ago. My lady, my mistress darlint, and may I say a little more?" whined Owenee, as they reached the outlet to the road.

"Certainly," said Edith; and like an emancipated chamois, he took to his rocks again.

In a state of extreme agitation Edith walked towards the hamlet. Whom she had seen, even Judy Beardon—all she had heard—the melancholy mystery of the bower explained—Meteor's friendliness with the vagrant band accounted for—the singular part Owenoe had acted in the events that crowded upon her—his relationship to one thus strangely mixed up with the destinies of her family—the lamentable state of mind of this extraordinary being—forced to keep a secret, which was, to her naturally candid disposition, the most painful task that could be imposed, especially when those to whom she might confide were so well qualified for hearing and retaining what it was good to conceal—so ready to impart peace, and competent to minister advice whenever the occasion required—and above all, a depressing knowledge of the trust she bore, its importance and yet its unsuitableness to her hands. She pressed the detested portrait firmly close beneath

her fingers. "To view him more!" in strong confidence she murmured, "never! should years elapse or I die, ere Josephine receives all of his pledge that inviolate remains."

Fearful recollections, trembling anticipations, fruitful sorrow was heaped upon her, and she half tottered beneath the load. Once, twice, three times Edith sat by the road-side to renew her vigour of body and spirit. She envied the birds; they rose in their own element, light and free as it; the grasshopper fell, but as instantly sprang from his difficulty. She got up, but the air inspired her not; wearily she moved, harassed and straitened in thought.

Edith's sadness of countenance, when taking farewell of Nelly, was wholly attributed by this zealous friend to the pain of separation, which, though she concealed, Nelly felt most deeply, remembering "life was short, and she had made a long tarrying here; her candle must soon go out, and she would be left in the dark cold vault alone."

in other days repaired, and spread their nets to dry ; it was then portioned off with slight wood palings from the common thoroughfare ; this rustic fence had disappeared, and rods of iron confined a paltry green, and sternly regulated the formal carriage drive.

Although prepared for a great revolution in the aspect of every thing, Mr. Leslie was considerably affected by it. He had not visited this spot since his beloved wife's youth, and long before the birth of their child. He turned to Edith. She was the same in feature and in name ; fast by his side the young plant grew, supporting her father's decaying arms, and sheltering his bark from the lightning blast that suddenly destroys solitary trees. He praised heaven for this comfort in his affliction.

## CHAPTER VII.

Upon the waves a light is gleaming—  
Ill-omened brightness, sent by death  
To light the night-black depths beneath.

L. E. L.

Immediately after the arrival of Mr. Leslie and his daughter, there came to Brighton an individual, on whose account alone both would have shunned this neighbourhood; and as the maiden placed within the dragon's reach has cause for fear, so Edith must have dreaded her vicinity to one whose single breath had poisoned the air of her world.

Equally unconscious of her presence, whom oftenest he sought to conjure to his view, Alaric



Elphinstone rode slowly along the eastern cliff; his countenance was thoughtful and sallow, giving to his dark eyes a gloomier cast. It might be care of mind that shadowed his brow, yet most it seemed the effects of dissipation; and he bent his face towards the sea, as desiring vitality from its fragrance. This motion had not the salutary effect; changes turbulent and various as the billows convulsed his features. Did he discern the coast across those waters, and recal scenes that stirred his soul within him, and discovered its barrenness?—that men unknowingly determined the seat of honour and wisdom. Was that expression following his frowning, a sneer at those who judge a man's integrity by his own declaration, and believe wisdom a virgin? Did he triumph in having deceived the world?

Dissatisfied with the ocean prospect, Elphinstone gazed upon the empty houses; his eyes wandered along the uninterrupted distance, and he confessed Brighton was unusually dull. "Wherefore regret," he soliloquized, "since I hoped it

would be so. Conscious of the attractions that must lead the busy and gay elsewhere, I came hither to enjoy the misery fortune and folly conspired, have abundantly dealt me. Tell him, Fate! What has made your dupe avoid dice and pleasures falser, not less bewitching that you have erected before him, as joint finger-posts to ruin? Have I a heart left? Can I fear? Can I feel? Was I young enough to be influenced by an old dame's chiding? Would I had remained ignorant, and comparatively innocent as I was on that wretched day, than know what to my dire cost I have learned since. She prophesied—the woman prophesied my undoing!”

The equestrian had arrived opposite Kemp Town, which was, at the time we speak, in a very unfinished state. Looking up, he suddenly exclaimed, “Hah! my uncle Willoughby's—his house open—blinds raised—shutters back! They are always in the country at this season; I have not known them let it; how happens it then of the few habitable houses, this is the only one not

closed. I have been living underground with the mole, and heard nothing for a sickly age of these my noon-day relations. When I return from my ride, I will make inquiries on the premises. Though I dare never again approach their country-seat, I may sup with the Willoughbys here, far from rumour and suspicion."

With this resolution Elphinstone cantered his horse along the Eastbourne road.

The sun was far set, and the heaven's blue scarf just edged with a golden fringe dipping in the sea, told where her glowing lord had disappeared, when the passionless moon, pale and serene, assumed her throne in the hemisphere.

The glory of his presence that the king had diffused was not gathered to his court in the west, and Luna looked modestly forth. The mixture of sunlight and moonshine was pleasingly blended, when Elphinstone walked his horse homeward. He regarded the heavens with much

interest, and mused upon their mysterious rulers.

"The patient lady will triumph ere long ; man and the sun alike are swayed by women. She looks mischievous to-night," he said, "her bashfulness has something in't. Oft, with imperturbable gravity, has she gazed on the storm her coronation raised, heard the mariners wail, and seen the bark go down—has witnessed bloody murder and fouler crimes than Sol knows of, yet calmly has she sat out the night."

Elphinstone shuddered ; did the dark thought suggest to his mind hours of crime that brought self-accusation ?

With the rise of the moon the sea began visibly to swell ; waves that had rolled smoothly now broke into white foam, and the sea-birds' screams were more frequent and shrill. The fishermen gathered their garments around them, and with one consent making for the shore, stranded their boats on the beach.

"A storm is at hand," thought Elphinstone,

whilst regarding these indications of its approach, and busied noting the fishing community's precautions for the safety of their little barks, that, assisting each other, they hauled under shelter of the town. Engrossed and interested by these distant scenes, he overlooked immediate objects, till recalled to himself by his horse making a desperate plunge; at the same moment he received a blow upon the near leg. Recovering his seat, the howling of a hound that again dashed upon him, showed Elphinstone the cause of disturbance.

With some difficulty he steadied his horse, and Meteor was at his side. "How now, my good dog?" he exclaimed. The bloody paws of the animal had deeply marked his dress; the dog was dripping with salt water, foaming at the mouth, and his eyes rolling fearfully. "Here is something strange! Meteor, my old friend, in this plight—in this place!"

The dog would not be pacified, but snuffed and

moaned towards the sea, whither he seemed to wish the young man might follow.

"I go," he cried, and leaped his horse over the road fence.

Meteor held on before him, till he stopped at the brow of the cliff, and lying down, strained his neck over the precipice.

"There is something here," said Elphinstone, who, dismounting, that he might approach more safely, walked cautiously to the spot.

The horse, who had hitherto followed the rein, made a determined stand, and his master was compelled to let him go.

Undermined by the sea, the cliffs from time to time had given way, and there was a deep fissure in the one on which our adventurer stood; but the excitement of the moment was such that he forgot his weight might have hurled it instantly to the foaming abyss. Stretching forward on the rifted bank, to his horror and dismay, he discovered at the foot of the precipice a human form, lying apparently lifeless. The

little creek thus occupied was completely sea-girt, and every moment threatened to wash these vestiges of mortality from his sight.

Despair and agony seized the young man, when he remembered Meteor's mistress, and felt assured she must have been dashed from the height on which he rested. As if the dog imagined Elphinstone had seen enough to understand the urgent necessity for making an effort in his mistress's behalf, with a whine conjuring his attendance, the faithful animal sped along the cliffs, till coming to a divided part he plunged down a precipitous path.

Like one frenzied, Elphinstone pursued, and taking the same descent, was on a dry strand seldom washed except in great floods, and considerably above high water mark. The tide had risen on his left to the foot of the bay. Meteor, tearing up the flints with his hinder paws, dashed into the waves, and buffeting the surf was quickly lost to view. Elphinstone attempted to follow—but the water was already so high

that in the shallowest treading it reached his middle.

Where he had descended there was a large boat turned keel uppermost, for the purpose of caulking; it appeared in the most dilapidated condition, the seams staring so as to threaten immediate swamping, were it even possible for a man's unassisted strength to bring her to the water's edge. He looked above for aid: the moon pitied him not, neither melted the rocks

at his tearful lament; no bark was on the ocean to which he could signal; there was no one on the shore where the sea had not reached.

In this helpless situation he espied a door-way in the rock, which rushing towards, with his concentrated force and huge stones, he endeavoured to wrench open—all to no avail—the bolts within resisted.

Fearfully bruised, he was compelled to relinquish his purpose of selecting a sea-worthy boat from the store. Driven to desperation he seized



the leaky one, and with supernatural might .  
turned her over.

This accomplished, he rested for an instant to overcome the palpitation his exertions brought on ; the next, she was afloat ; springing into her, and steadying the crazy bark with a pole he found beneath, Elphinstone dared the terrible element, regardless of the water that oozed in at every pore ; he rounded the nearest promontory, and catching sight of Meteor still swimming, made tremendous efforts to attain the same point.

Joy and anguish overtook him ; he beheld a mass of white clothes, that as instantly the waves drifted from the shore. To save her lifeless body had been his only hope—this was denied him—it floated out to sea ! He became giddy, and had nigh lost his oar, when a bark from the strand caused him to look once again. She was yet there ; her shawl had been carried away ; this had deceived him. Meteor yelled and lapped up the sea at her feet, consuming the ocean lest it should drown his mistress, who knelt in the attitude of

prayer; her hands clasped the rock, her head had fallen on her bosom—she had fainted. Elphinstone caught to his arms Edith Leslie—not her mangled body.

There was no time for indulging his gaze upon that lovely face; his boat was half full of water—every moment he thought she must go down. With one arm supporting the maiden, with the other urging his bark, the young man strove to regain the beach he had left.

Meteor kept alongside for a few yards, his strength gradually failed, and with his last look on the boat, that contained his mistress, the faithful animal sank in the deep. The white foam, tinged with his blood, curdled over his head; tears of poignant grief fell from Elphinstone's eyes, as incapable of assisting the generous creature he witnessed his dying agony.

He was yet at a distance from the shore when he felt the boat settle, and leaping over the side, endeavoured to save his treasure by swimming. The current was strong against him; but after a

few bold strokes he reached a landing-place. The salt water had broken over her face, and Edith's hair twined round her white throat and fell in wild disorder on his shoulder. Pale and pure as a crystalline gem recovered from the ocean's hoard she seemed, beneath the dark features of Elphinstone, her preserver.

"I have saved thee!" he exultingly exclaimed, and pressed her to his breast. "No, I dare not kiss her; were she sensible she would recoil from me. I will not violate those lips, beautiful girl! thy purity guards thee!"

Just then a man, issuing from the doorway that in his previous excitement Elphinstone mistook for a boat-house, ran towards the group.

"My mistress! she's drowned, I'm late, o'er late to save her!"

It was Power. He knelt down before Elphinstone: "Give her to me! give her body to me, young man! that I may carry her to her father. I saw the day she was born; I must now be her bearer to her grave."

Elphinstone placed the old man's hand upon her beating heart, which assured him there was life more readily than in any other way, and followed this by a history of her rescue.

"Thank you, bless you!" he cried, "I always said you had a handsome face, and my heart was not with them when they sent you away. Your horse told me there was something wrong somewhere, and I thought on my lady first. Ye'll forgive me I trow. Surely the gallant beast knew his own stable. But come! We must bring my mistress home. I'll guide you the course; it's been lately cut they tell me, and perhaps you no know it. There's not a soul about at this time, and the underground passage leads nigh the house. We must have her in before the master return; for the wonder of the world, a stroke of providence, he's gone to the library to get a book to read to Missy when she comes from her walk. The ways to the sea were not known to her, poor dear! the monster took advantage of her innocence, and e'en promised himself a dainty meal.

What a tale for a father to hear! how good to know the creature's balked. My eyes seem ten years younger for that learning. I dare affirm she have lost the key; it makes no matter, the door opens on the inside, and by luck I ha'n't shut it; haste and carry her, Mr. Elphinstone, it becomes you more nor me."

, The young man gladly obeyed these orders, and when they reached the house, he waited in an adjoining room till informed of Miss Leslie's restoration, and took his departure, purposing to call on the morrow, with the satisfactory excuse of inquiring for her health.

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signal deliverance. Whatever blot might mar his character, and render him unfit for an intimate acquaintance, in this his last act he had acquitted himself nobly, and ought to be repaid by at least her acknowledgment of his services.

In obedience to her parent's wishes, Edith prepared to receive her preserver, at the same time she petitioned her father not to defer this visit through anxiety for her health, declaring herself better prepared for the interview now than she might be even a day subsequent to the appointed one.

In his usual gentle manner, Mr. Leslie yielded to her wishes, silently regretting that never having denied his child a single request, he could not on this occasion enforce a judicial authority he considered for her good.

It was not her recent exposure to imminent danger that continued to disturb Edith, although the recollection was indeed terrible. When she believed the eternal ocean and those giant cliffs severed earth and its dear relations from her sight,

and future participation in its enjoyments and interests, at this hour, even its pains were beloved in her memory, where she stood ; for ever to walk on the confines of both worlds, Edith felt would be preferable to the doom that awaited her. Every moment made the next more terrible. In piteous earnestness she paced the strand, and wrung her hands and wept ; in agony poured forth her laments ; she listened, and wildly stared, but neither the rocks, the boisterous flood, nor the soaring raven heeded her ; and then, in the calmness of desperation she numbered the remaining stones, lost the calculation, and numbered them again. The sea came fiercely on, the waves moaned her funeral dirge, Meteor left her alone to her fate, and emboldened by his desertion, fishy monsters, whose mouths gaped horribly, seemed in her frightened fancy swarming round, impatient for their prey ; and her paralyzed tongue refused to aid her eyes, as they mounted heavenward ; when a helpless, hopeless child, she bowed before her Maker, who compassionately wrapped



her senses in forgetfulness—tranquil as the sleep of angels !

Her weighty obligations—the profound debt of gratitude due to one she dreaded to name or think upon, and whom she was thus unexpectedly called to meet—feelings which she could not unravel to herself—confused and agitated her mind, and produced excitement throughout her frame. She longed to discover her case to her father, but knew not how to describe the indescribable sensations, and dared not yet divulge the secrets that troubled her. The superstition of her nature, pity towards a miserable being, and fidelity to her charge, forbade a disclosure teeming with sorrow and wonder.

Edith's constitution sensibly gave way beneath the trials, that without interruption or mitigation assailed her. She was desirous Mr. Elphinstone's visit should quickly take place, fearing, if postponed, she might never be able to perform the parts her father prescribed ; and concealing the real cause from her anxious parent, she endea-

voured to bear up against weakness and grief and evil destiny.

A second time in Edith's hearing Mr. Elphinstone was announced. A quick pain shot through her breast and pierced her heart—so severe, it caught her breath, and pressing her hand over the affected part, she strove to subdue her emotion. When the young man saw the heroine of his thoughts so pale, so changed from the first moment (two years since) they had met, he staggered at the apparition that rose before him—the same he had supported a few hours back, and whose palor he then attributed to the accident of the moment—the peculiar situation in which she was found.

Those lustrous orbs he worshipped in secret her eyes, were unclosed; this was the only perceptible recovery one day had achieved. Fixed to the spot, while tears clouded his vision Elphinstone had no power to advance. Edith stretched out her hand.

“Mr. Elphinstone, I have here to acknowledg

what I can never repay—you have saved my life, and I thank you.”

Her fair white hand shook within his; he felt he dared not press it, and quickly liberated the little trembler.

Mr. Leslie, entering the room, expressed, with a fulness and pathos a father can alone understand, his gratitude to the preserver of his darling, only child—only friend—almost only relative.

After acknowledging Mr. Leslie's kindness more by countenance than articulation, the young man summoned voice enough to proceed. “For myself,” he said, “I deserve little credit for performing my duty. Meteor directed me to the rescue of his mistress; had not my means circumscribed my will, he should have been here to witness the result of his latest act of fidelity.”

“Poor dear Meteor!” said Edith, with emotion, who had learnt his death in her behalf through Power, and wept over his fate, “poor dear fellow! you and I both have cause to lament and love him.”

"We have met in strange adventures, and Meteor has befriended us in common," replied the young man, in the same impressive tone.

Edith checked her unguarded flow of sympathy, and drew up her head in silence.

Elphinstone persisted; "he and I, on enchanted ground, twice found each other—the third time we were fated to meet has dissolved the charm. The dog is drowned, and I—" he hesitated, and observing Edith's countenance, rose to depart. "Dare I hope you will not banish me from your acquaintance altogether?"

Mr. Leslie was pained, and turned his head away.

"Examine yourself, Mr. Elphinstone," said Edith with a firm accent, "and know you are not a meet companion for my father's daughter. I wish you well, and if that well be ill, 'tis from a holy motive I address you thus. More I cannot, may not trust myself to speak." She turned from him, and Elphinstone left the room, the house, and was heard to gallop his horse from the door.

"He is gone!" she said, "now for ever!" throwing herself in her father's arms; "and let us, dear papa, quit this place instantly."

He soothed her agitation, and promised to depart with the morning's light.

"I must see Josephine."

"This you shall, my dear! we shall make a point of returning that way."

"Thank you, my own darling papa; how is it you never deny me? Is this good for us always?"

"Bless you, my love!" he said, kissing her, "I have not a soul to please beside my little one."

"We shall go by Josephine's; this is the last favour I will ever, ever ask—then home—and with papa—die!"

Again she had fainted. In agony he pressed his darling closer to him—thought on Nelly's warning—but for her sake for whom he lived quieted himself, till she revived, and waked hope afresh with her opening eyes.

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dreadful. Such I have lived to witness, yea to experience; her words showed she had discovered my secret, and the opportunity she took of expressing that I was a dangerous acquaintance, proved her not altogether indifferent to my passion. This is a comfort—a consolation—if frost after rain be so—it smoothes the face of the water, while it seals the reservoir.”

Thus incoherently spoke Alaric Elphinstone, as he hurried from the town where he had risked his life and lost his mistress. A banished man could not look back more frequently or more timidly at the loved spot of his youth, nor feel greater torture in those stolen surveys than did Elphinstone, at the place where his love had risen to a climax, and all his hopes lay blasted.

With far different feelings, and yet intimately connected, our heroine journeyed from Brighton. To Edith, the downs that seemed to swell and fall with the ocean, and like it formed a grand feature in the piece, these were unchanged since her mother's visit, and had been venerated and

admired accordingly; but now they appeared interminably monotonous and unusually barren. She longed for another scene to assure her she was far distant from the hated spot these embosomed, and only returned her eyes from the town to calculate the progress already made, and to hope, when next she gazed, the top-most spire might have disappeared.

With a nervous anxiety to flee from the past that afforded little besides pain in the retrospection, Edith looked forward to her meeting with Josephine as to a time that should lighten her of an oppressive load of care. After this had taken place, she could tranquilly seat herself by Nelly's fireside, and read aloud her large text bible, garden with her father, and as he older grew, become his support to the village church. She longed again to visit her beloved mother's grave, and learn how many more were added to the cemetery she had left so full. Was Margery Toms, poor old Margery, yet gathered to her fathers? She had tears in store for that event—



how soon might she not have to shed them? She had lost a very faithful friend and favourite companion—Meteor was not. She would extol his memory to Nelly; together they would honour and mourn him.

In such melancholy thoughts consisted all the happiness left to Edith Leslie.

Elphinstone's dismissal ringing in his hearing, continued to urge him onward; and with but a faint glimmering of his destination, he plunged deeper and deeper into the country.

Many stages distant from Brighton he was delayed on the road, from his horse casting a shoe. When the animal was again in travelling order, our hero set out late in an afternoon to prosecute his journey to the next post town. Evening was the season he particularly enjoyed, its gloom and mystery being most in accordance with his feelings, which were of a grave and mournful character. He preserved an equal speed, neither hastening on account of the increasing darkness, nor slackening his pace to

await moon-rise, and submit to be guided by lamp of night.

Trusting the selection of his route to his guide, his horse, his dark complexion and black charcoal mingled with the shade of night. Our travellers heeded not the lonesomeness of the way, which an ordinary mind would have occasioned much apprehension. It was a cool calm night, the glow-worms sparkling on the banks, seemed the only living things awake, besides the equestrian and his conscience, which kept him evil company and filled up the time with maddening allusions to the past, and tormenting insinuations for the future. He was ready to call in question all laws of his country, of which he was once an ardent supporter—the laws of fashion and religion as gross prejudice when opposed to crime whose face looked well and cheerful in his sight. “Hah!” he thinks again, “’tis bloody; the shadow of himself is a foul murderer; an unburied carcass, all putrefied, is not more disgusting to his memory. Fiends, already impatient to wr

their vengeance on him, delighted at the event of their joys anticipated, shall grin, and leer, and mimic, and dance around their victim, and jibe his ardour when he cannot get away, and pinch his flesh, and suck the marrow from his bones, and bind him with cords made of his own sinews, and keep him living still, and plague him throughout eternity. I should be happy if I could believe there were no second state—my soul—my witness here. Infidelity I cannot—away with its blandishment, its deceit, its abject folly; no greater coward than an infidel, who dares not confess an hereafter because he has not courage to meet a judge. He fears the light that shall discover his uttermost thought, and reveal his most concealed sins. What am I saying? am I mad? am I cursing myself before my time? what have I to offer as my excuse? what shield to buckle on, and screen me in such an hour? May I hope for mercy who am wholly unclean? Only the pure man, the honest, the righteous, can walk upright through that maze of light.

He! the religious. Religion, which so  
think so irksome—this garment is proo  
doubt—of a texture approved by heave  
commission. The night! this is the  
lie denning, and I am dreaming. Ba  
and good, hand-in-hand are waltzing  
my brain. Confusion besets me. Wh  
Sear? Thunder! no, the sounds they  
earth."

Hamletting himself, Elphinstone tu  
the direction of the noise. He saw  
and flashes of fire in the winding road  
him.

The sound, and vividness of the light  
increasing, he took the precaution of dra  
his horse close under the hedge, and wai  
impatience for the result.

Nearer, nearer, nearer it came—as  
sawed his sight what appeared a snake  
fire.

"Satan in original shape," he m  
through his clenched teeth. The horse

to the earth, and Elphinstone beheld a carriage whirled along by two infuriated animals, their hoofs striking fire at every stone, and showers of sparks pouring from the wheels, left a burning trail behind.

Quick as thought he plunged his spurs into his horse's sides, and with a spring the animal bounded forward. A true son of the desert, to the full he extended his split nostrils (I) for the first time since he set hoofs on English ground, and the Tartar steed's mettle being up, swift as a torrent he was soon on a line with the flying coach ; he was ahead, and well managed, yielded to his rider's hand, who, wheeling him with a steady and instant pressure, at the same moment straining from the saddle and raising his riding whip, inflicted a deadly blow upon one of the carriage horses ; he fell—and dragged his fellow under him !

Smothered cries issued from the vehicle, and Elphinstone flinging aside all encumbrance sprang

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the other's face. Elphinstone felt he was undiscovered, and altered his voice better to support concealment.

Every intonation of Edith's was to him more cheering than the most rejoicing beverage; he breathed not when she spoke, lest he should lose the sense of a word.

Hand in hand sire and daughter stood; Edith had relinquished to her father the place she held by Elphinstone's side; each was greatly overcome by the scene, and for some time silently gazed at the devastation the fire continued to make.

Suddenly Edith sprang forward, and seizing Elphinstone's arm, exclaimed: "Good, kind stranger! Oh will you, can you save what I would not lose for worlds? 'Tis on the seat—a portrait—you'll find it in a ease."

Hardly knowing what he did, Elphinstone making his way through the burning faggots, recovered the treasure, and placing it in Edith's

hands, thought as he did so, "a poor fellow whom? I am undone—she loves another."

He sighed deeply, and Edith in anxiety asked, "If he had been hurt?" He returned no answer, but slouching his hat over his eyes, he released the horse, that had been thrown by the other's fall, and, exhausted had lain on the ground when the fire running along the path struck the poor beast, and caused it to seek freedom.

Soon effecting his purpose, Elphin returned with the liberated animal to the town, and judging from the distance he had travelled that they could not be more than half a mile from the town, suggested that Mr. Leslie should mount the post-horse, and leave Edith to his care. Accordingly he wheeled his own animal, and throwing his cloak over the saddle, placed Edith thereon, and led the horse beside her father's, the party moved on to the place of their destination.

The following circumstances led to the



result just related. Anxious to reach —— before midnight, Mr. Leslie took horses from the last stage; after they had proceeded some distance, he concluded from the strange conduct of the post-boy that he must be drunk or deranged; and comforting himself with the idea that when a driver quarrels with his horses, the ground gained at every eruption tells rapidly, he resolved to dismiss any further fear for the consequences of the fellow's intemperance, and leaning back in the carriage endeavoured to draw Edith's attention to other subjects. He had not tranquillized himself long, when Power, getting on his feet, called out to the post-boy "to alter his pace from the irregular gait at which he was going, and to keep steadily on, or he would summon him at the next quarter sessions for any damage his master's carriage should sustain between this and then."

From moderately loud expostulations, Power's voice rose to bellowing, which the postilion, who swayed backwards and forwards in his saddle, heeded as little as the former harangue; and Mr.

Leslie, feeling it necessary to interfere lest his faithful domestic should burst a blood vessel in his violence, was on the point of lowering one of the windows to put a stop to the debate, when the post-boy, losing his balance, fell from his seat, and rolled on the ground.

Power's voice instantly ceased, and Mr. Leslie believed he had jumped from the rumble, but was unable to overtake the carriage; as the horses, freed from restraint, already rendered violent by the scourging of the rider, dashed forwards at a fearful pace.

Mr. Leslie was a soldier, and no way dismayed at this turn of affairs, exhorted his child to be patient, endeavoured to assuage her terrors, and told her there was nothing more dangerous than leaping from a vehicle urged at such speed. They sat still, contemplating their fearful situation with mingled feelings; but in prayer both were agreed, and solemnly petitioned the same thing.

Edith, whose first impulse was to fling herself

from the carriage, now, in placid obedience, remained by her father, ready to die with him, or be saved if heaven mercifully decreed.

At length the extraordinary degree of friction caused the wheels to take fire, and this new terror was but just discovered, when Elphinstone came so timely to their aid.

The lamps of the town were already distinguishable, and Edith and her father joined in entreaties that their preserver should attend them to the same inn, where they might be in a better condition after rest to thank him for his valuable services.

Elphinstone refused all proffers of kindness, declaring he must journey onwards as soon as his charge had been acquitted. Mr. Leslie and Edith conjured him to tell his name, that they might know to whom they were indebted. Elphinstone answered Leslie with a polite evasion, and in an under-tone to Edith, "you'd like better not to hear it—'twere bad for you and me."

Again he drew his hat over his brows, and raised the collar of his coat to meet it, so as to conceal nearly every portion of his face. Edith observed this movement, which, joined to his mysterious words, instantly suggested to her imagination that her saviour was a robber, perhaps a murderer. Apprehension chilled her, and she trembled in her seat.

"Fear nothing, gentle lady!" whispered Elphinstone, perceiving her terror, "shall I not perform the task I have begun? See! we approach the town; you will have other guards anon. My life is pledged to misery. We are not fit companions for each other."

He checked himself. Edith shook yet more violently. She was familiar with these words but knew not where she had heard them, or the voice that spoke.

At length her fears gave way; she considered that, even if an highwayman and an outcast, his guide merited her unreserved thankfulness; and instantly pity for his condition gained the upper

hand, and she addressed him softly, almost tenderly.

“Stranger ! I will not press you to disclose a name which seems allied with suffering. Guard it, but especially from dishonour—this will be a death-bed consolation. Guilt never knew peace in that hour.”

The stranger groaned, but answered not.

This was said in an under-tone, meant only for Elphinstone’s hearing ; now Edith spoke aloud.

“Some acknowledgment you must accept from us, or my father and I will be left to feel we are under an obligation to one, who having rescued such insignificant individuals from imminent peril, was careless of owning their appreciation of his valour, or too proud to receive thanks.”

Mr. Leslie joined in Edith’s persuasions, who, taking from her bosom a gold chain, with her father’s approbation bestowed it upon their guide. He bowed, and received the gift the fair girl threw over his head.

"The value of the gold is trifling," she continued; "but it memorialises an event never to be forgotten by the donor—a night blessedly spent by the wearer!"

"And it shall never leave its place while life and I are one," replied Elphinstone, in an agitated manner, at the same moment the party stopped opposite the hotel in the town of —

A post-chaise coming up at a rapid pace, discharged the faithful Power, whose joy and gratitude were unbounded at seeing his beloved master and mistress alive and unhurt.

The accident having occurred on the outset of the journey, after his voluntary fall, in which he received some slight bruises, and after pursuing the equipage a certain distance to no purpose Power thought it prudent to return to — and procuring a chaise, followed the same route in the hope of overtaking the runaway vehicle, and rendering assistance to the sufferers. He had seen the remains of the old carriage, and finding no traces of its proprietors, and one horse gone

concluded some timely assistance had been rendered by an accidental traveller; and oftentimes expressed his thankfulness "that Mrs. Hipps was not of the party," as she had certain sure come in for nothing short of broken bones, or a singed wig; whilk in either case 'ud cost her summut; 'tis better she was, by a deal, an airing the sheets agin their return."

Our cavalier, seeing Edith and her father engrossed in the old man's description of his escape, and fearing they would present him as their preserver to this favourite domestic, thought the present a convenient opportunity for taking his departure unobserved; accordingly, mounting his horse and avoiding the coach-road, (which he was assured the Leslies would pursue) and equally anxious to distance the town, Elphinstone followed the course of a lane that at its commencement appeared to run parallel with the main track. He became bewildered with the intricate windings, and meeting no house where to inquire and get his difficulties solved, wandered about till the

grey light of morning by degrees unfolded the landscape. Tired and sad, he gazed around in quest of a habitation of some description.

He looked long and vainly ; when, coming to a high hedge, he thought he saw through the boughs something resembling a gipsy encampment in motion, at that early hour probably preparing for a journey. Just as he came to this conclusion, there issued from behind the bank, a man leading a donkey, on which sat an aged being of singular and almost superhuman appearance. The animal she bestrode was covered with ragged mantles of scarlet and blue ; a patched sack, filled with some yielding material, formed her rude saddle ; she was closely attended by another male, in an almost naked condition. Three burdened asses followed the group, and one or more of a younger type, unencumbered, but grave and slow, alternately cropped the scanty browse the hedges afforded, and, cheering their booty, followed the elders of the herd.

The female attracted Elphinstone's attention :



the pale light of the morning star shed a sickly glare upon her head—a bald woman (a fabulous monster) passed before him. She was haggard and ugly—as sin and misery impress their talons.

“Will ye let us pass without a favour?” cried the woman, in a screech owl’s note; “and do ye think luck will attend ye? ye night-riding scape?”

She held out a grisly palm to the stranger, who immediately searched for his purse. In doing this he accidentally disclosed Edith’s gift, upon which the woman flung herself from the ass, at the same moment clutching the chain, which she tore from his neck, and retreating a few paces, held it in the air.

“How came ye by this? do ye live in the night-watch, and hide in the day?”

Infuriated, Elphinstone darted upon her. Stepping aside, she unbent her body, that years had doubled, and stretching to her full height, presented a commanding and terrible aspect.

“Stand back, young man! nor tempt my

blood, which runs murderously high at times. Shun Judy Reardon, as you would the foulest place the tongue knows to name—the evil dread. Avoid ye me! listen well, answer truly, and the gelt is thine back again. By this,” she said, pointing to a small ornament that depended from the chain, and which Elphinstone had not observed before,” by this jewel sacrificed, I purchased peace of mind. It is a maiden’s gear, the chain—the key’s a man’s—a better and a comelier onst never stepped this earth; but now”—she waved her hand before her face, seemed troubled and confused. At length she proceeded: “mark the handle—its device—’tis an hour-glass, and a key that unlocks a secret makes a becoming end. How came ye by the trink?”

“’Twas given me by a lady.”

“Young, eh?”

“And lovely too.”

“’Tis her—the foolish maiden—take off ye cowl—throw down your habit; let me see thee

nor be deceived into condemning an innocent man."

Elphinstone maintained his dress in its original state, nor cared to convince the woman.

In a tone of offence at his disobedience, she exclaimed: "Nevertheless I know thee, young man; thou canst not marry her—thou durst not—go far from this virtuous babe, nor distract a breast thou couldst not heal, nor try a faith that's perjured if it listen to thee. I swear no good can come of such an alliance; even in thought entwined were death to both. The raven and the dove do not match together. Shun the path her virgin feet tread, as the *hardy-straw* (K) the church's walk—who dares pollute the hallowed way dies ere he reach the middle. Take the fatal charm!" she cried, surrendering the broken chain, "and repent that ye ever saw this night."

Almost totally exhausted, the woman leaned against the ass that had borne her.

"I am dying!" she moaned, "but my spirit

is light. Oh, why did I not stay on the crag's head—'twere nearer my place. I had a dream—the witch of the cairn was with me abed; she got up, she went on before, she looked back, and pointed at me with the forked end of a horse-shoe. 'I come, I come!' I cried! and she led me down here. 'I have work for ye,' she kept on a saying—'tis done—she's silent now, and don't see her. She's gone that used to call me daughter! and I must after her right speedily."

"Stay, mother, stay!" whined both her sons together. The younger, in a rapture of sorrow exclaimed, "We are not far from the cle trickling stream, wait until we get there, and ye sail softly down the tide; I'll bury ye by the side of the burn, and it will lullaby my mammy sweetly. Corny and I will too come there sleep, and ye need not fear to be alone—only for a little while."

The elder shed tears that rolled down his silver beard, for Corny was already an old man, and pitiless storms had broken over his head.

"Mother," he said, "ye have begged for us, ye have lied for us, ye have robbed for us, ye have starved for us, and now ye'll be for dying, and leaving the boys ye reared to pine alone. Take courage, and I'll do the same for ye, that ye did for me. I'll beg and steal, I'll lie, (that same comes easy to me) and I'll live for ye—and ye alone."

He stroked her face, and bade her cheer up, and both together raised her on the donkey.

Elphinstone was touched at the scene before him, and offered some gold to the sufferer, which she rejected in scorn.

"Hence, hence, and away ! nor tread this path, nor the heights of Malvern, nor the dark moor by her side, nor the rock's shell, lest ye take the blood of the dove with you, and leave her body with the sexton, his axe and his shovel. I curse you not -- nor bless you ; hence from my eyes ! ere they blister ye ! for I must die, and I would die without blood on my hands or a ban in my mouth."

So this strange meeting ended; and with a tremour, like a death-chill imparted in her last words, the traveller gathered to his bosom the severed chain:

“She’s betrothed to another! she loves another; this key and the portrait are his. Fairest girl! be happy; my honour is pledged—I’ll not molest thee. Wonderful sybil! who hast showed me that I know, and believed but one other besides could tell. Thou hast exposed me to myself, and caused me to tremble at thy threats. Woman has accomplished what man durst not attempt with Alaric Elphinstone.” And with many a sickening thought, and vague apprehension of a mysterious nature, he pursued his wandering course.

## CHAPTER IX.

Mystery obscures the scene  
 As a cloud, dark, dense, and shapeless ;  
 Low a luminous cherub ('tis love) suddenly rends  
 the veil,  
 That folds up in blood.

Josephine was peculiarly fortunate in the  
 clergyman of her parish, to whom Mr. Bourne  
 had specially commended this forlorn creature.  
 A zealous pastor of a numerous flock, he visited  
 from house to house, praying in one, exhorting in  
 another, and dropping in each something for the  
 benefit of the soul as well as the body.

His partner in life and in eminently christian  
 principles, fulfilled the more delicate duties of the  
 mission, bestowing upon the female portion of

the community, the tender, and the infinitely peculiar attention ; and the young ladies, daughters were called by the villagers) Anne, and Miss Sarah, were beloved next to their parents.

This family formed an interesting and useful circle, having at heart the spiritual and temporal interests of their fellow creatures.

Teaching the Misses Stewart, French, and embroidery, erecting the lighter and elegant fabric upon the already solid basis of their education, pleasingly employed the time of the Lady Josephine, and afforded a ready excuse for covering the obligation by rendering easier of acceptance the charitable benevolent group were willing to bestow upon the young widow.

Enlarging his patronage, Mr. Stewart for Josephine a collection of the children of the wealthier farmers, who congregated in a room in her little cottage, she taught the rudiments of reading and writing, with the use of the simple art of sewing.



Mr. Stewart encouraged Josephine to enter more and more deeply into the spirituality of the religion she had adopted, placing it before her in light that multiplied its brightness to infinity, pointing to the Saviour, and showing the easy access to his throne by prayer that faith and repentance made sincere. She became convinced of its purity and sublimity. This once proud woman—who took sorrow and trial as a penance, a satisfactory expiation for sin, whilst thus imbued, believing she assisted in the redemption of her own soul—now humbly leaned on her Saviour's cross, confessed her unworthiness, and gave him all the glory of her salvation.

She was happy in the peace and support religion gave, and cultivated with anxious care the sacred germ in the tender breast of her little Alaric. While she thanked her Lord for impressing this dear one with a love for holiness, she mourned, as a mother of earth, over the delicate boy she saw fading from her arms. Endeavouring to overcome her grief, she would

exclaim, "He is fitting for heaven! I shall meet him there! Oh, how blessed to have given an angel birth!"

Then sobs and tears would choke her utterance, when again she would break forth: "this one thing is wanting entirely to prostrate my will to that of heaven. When Alaric is gone, I shall have no tie to bind me to earth. Unfettered I shall shortly gain the same blue skies—there to rest—there to dwell for ever! How differently do I feel, how calmly can I speak at times of this separation! 'tis so short an one! Ah, no, 'tis the triumph of religion over earthliness. I was mad once when I thought him lost! Had I died in that state, how dreadful! Perhaps I shall be able to close those eyes I was wont to think fairer than the sun's early dawn; they warmed and cheered me when all beside was dim, and friends were nowhere to be found. But now I have friends, an host in One, and others he has added to me. A hostage for my own appearance, my love, I send thee before."

At the rectory, admitted on the footing of a much esteemed friend, Josephine's graceful manners and elegant attainments rendered her a desirable acquaintance to a family who, devoted to their parish, had neither time nor means to leave it, in pursuit of those luxuries of educational refinement the interesting widow brought amongst them. In return for these advantages, Josephine was instructed in the homelier branches of house-keeping and frugality, which she appreciated, as giving her comparative wealth in this world; by teaching her to husband her resources, and enabling her to afford a larger sum for charities in which she abounded—not, as in days of yore, under the conviction that she was providing for herself hereafter, (thus acting a narrow-minded, selfish, and superstitious part) but with a juster feeling, that what divine beneficence had provided, she should share and enjoy with his children.

The intrigue of her past life, its unprofitableness, its deep sinfulness, was often recalled by

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call, preserving in the eyes of men, a character unblemished for honour, replete with talent, and yet conscious of a grave crime, perpetuating and exaggerating his evil, by adding perjury to the deed, and pitilessly casting upon the world the wretched victims of his sin—she was compelled to abhor the man she once vowed to obey, and which oath inviolate she would have maintained through sickness and disaster, poverty and woe, nor questioned its obligations, nor found them difficult. But now, he and she were eternally separated—what might be his punishment in another world? Should she see him tortured? And dreadful screams might be heard from that lonesome house when such thoughts as these stormed the brain of the sensitive and suffering Josephine.

Her darling, waking from his sleep, recalled her at such times from her momentary distraction, and kneeling by his cot, she soothed the trembler, and condemned herself for giving way to feelings that her judgment reprehended. The

**RE: JAMES EARL RAY**

[illegible]

park, with the chimneys and belfry of an extensive mansion.

Josephine held her cottage from the lord of this estate, upon a portion of which it was situate. She knew nothing further of the inmates of that princely abode, and the clergyman was almost equally a stranger to them; for the family at "the great house" (as it was called by the country people) were rarely at home, preferring to spend their time in London, or on the continent, and leaving a steward to manage their affairs in this part.

But to return to Josephine's dwelling. The principal apartment was attained from without, by a flight of stone steps; on either side the lawn sloped down to a rippling stream, over which was thrown a rustic bridge.

This apartment formed the hall, and main access to the inferior rooms, which were indicated by doors within, arranged so as to ornament rather than disfigure this circular saloon. The ceiling was domed, and of a height unusual in so

small a building, giving an idea of space, and an air of elegance to the whole. The furniture, of the simplest material, was ordered with the same degree of taste observable throughout. The garden was stocked with flowers, bespeaking feminine arrangement, so delicately were the colours blended, and the choice sorts ingeniously placed to set off inferior ones.

Josephine loved to look on, to cull and scent these favourites of the boudoir ; but Josephine had not planted a single root, nor sown a seed in her little parterre. She pleaded ignorance of this branch of knowledge ; and Sarah Stewart was but too happy to have it in her power to return a small portion of her dear friend's kindness and patience, in teaching her the more rare accomplishments.

She was fond of children ; and the little Alaric proved such a sweet, intelligent companion in those pleasing toils, that she looked upon setting Josephine's garden in order as a recreation of the most delightful description.



The song of birds made this lovely retreat, to the ear and eye, a paradise ; and sitting under the scented porch Josephine contemplated a landscape of undulating country, and verdant copse, spread out beneath the blue sky ; hills, vales, water, and wood, each was there ; the world was all beautiful—only “ man was vile.”

She enjoyed such scenes as one brought to understand the intrinsic excellence of the works of her Creator, and encouraged to adore him, who made the heavens and the earth. Her pencil was her frequent companion, and with its assistance she endeavoured to make Edith acquainted with her home, and every nook and corner of interest in the neighbourhood ; so that when Edith should pay her a long promised visit, it might be to a spot hallowed by recollection, and replete with that interest excited by communion of thought.

Not only were these offerings deservedly appreciated by her friend, but anxious to divert Josephine's mind from its own griefs, (which the

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China cups and saucers, the kettle-holder put in readiness, and a plate awaited a fresh loaf of home-made bread, that her little maid was busy preparing.

Alaric searched in the nest, and found just two new-laid eggs, which were accordingly placed in the old-fashioned egg-boiler, so that nothing was wanting but water and patience to make them palatable.

This done, Josephine repaired to the garden, and cleared the fallen leaves of trees and flowers, picked the decaying stems and fading blossoms from encumbering the plants, and made all things look as fresh as the first hour they were born from the earth ; then shading Alaric's fair face with a coarse straw hat, took him with her to a rustic seat, where they remained till a carriage was defined in the distance, that nearer came, when both parties recognising each other, handkerchiefs were waved, and Alaric kissed his little hand to the strangers, and begged his

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Of circumstances. She shrank from imparting the secret that bound them—from touching upon his name who had taken away the peace of both.

Edith, as her own child, caressed the little Alaric, whilst she wept over his changed appearance, and was constrained to acknowledge his parent's fears for his health were not dictated by the over-anxiety of maternal love.

Josephine quickly construed the expression in Edith's countenance, and sighed farewell to hope.

After he had partaken of her hospitality, Mr. Leslie leaving his hostess and daughter together, walked about half a mile to the village inn, where the carriage had been put up; ostensibly for the purpose of engaging horses to take them on, but literally, because he was desirous of not restraining the friend's intercourse.

Edith seized this as a favourable opportunity for returning to Josephine what the supposed gipsey had stolen, but who proved to be no other

than the descendant of a reputed witch, the wild Judy Reardon.

This was an excruciatingly painful moment to both, recalling as it did a thousand melancholy thoughts, and scenes that menaced one dreadful though latent catastrophe—the deaths of two, it might be three, in that group. Taking the portrait from an outer case, in which Edith had secured it, not daring to open the inner clasp, and examine a face she knew too well—Josephine, pale and speechless, mechanically attached a black ribbon, and preserving the same grave silence, placed it round Alaric's neck, concealing the portrait in his bosom. The child was awed by the demeanour which accompanied this gesture, and hid his little face in his mother's lap, nor cried, nor spoke.

The morning had been bright and serene; suddenly the face of the heavens became overcast, and rain fell perpendicularly and heavily upon the thirsty ground. It seemed as though the elements sympathized in their distresses, and

Josephine gazed out upon the change a few short moments had effected ; she twined Alaric's flaxen ringlets round her fingers, and still seemed occupied in thought, when a shot fired close at hand made the friends start from their seats.

Two others followed in quick succession, and the tread of many feet approaching the entrance left them no time for deliberation. Some sporting dogs dashed into the apartment—the voice of one man calling them back, and of another chiding him for his punctiliousness, saying : “The brutes wanted shelter as well as themselves. What was it but a cottage after all ? and he was wilfully denying himself the pleasure of seeing a tidy little lass bustle, and look pettish, and who knows ? scold, till they kissed her anger away !”

There was something in the tones without, that sensibly affected both Edith and Josephine. They stood erect and motionless, incapable of aught besides receiving the sounds that rose and fell with the debate.

The first speaker seemed to have the best of the argument, and the dogs were withdrawn, and running up the steps together, the foremost (a tall and graceful young man) began to make excuse for his intrusion, hoping the dogs had not disturbed the family.

He raised his dripping hat from his brows, and Alaric Elphinstone was revealed before them!

He drew back in evident embarrassment; Edith attained a chair, sank into it, and covered her face with her hands. Josephine screamed a dreadful scream, and lay apparently lifeless; at the same time a heavy fall, and the discharge of a gun, shook the ground.

Ill as she was, the situation of her friend stimulated Edith to exertion. Elphinstone (whose countenance exhibited extreme agitation) raised the unfortunate Josephine, and supporting her in his arms, Edith with trembling hand applied restoratives. Neither spoke to the other, and the suspense that ensued was awful.



A cold perspiration ran down Elphinstone's face, while Edith's temples remained white and polished as Parian marble. The sobbing of the child occasionally broke the stillness—and made the scene more piteous. He held by Elphinstone's dress, from whom instinctively he appeared to expect guardianship. The young man looked from the mother to the child, and back again to the mother's face; then beneath his dark brows stealthily raised his eyes towards Edith.

Since the first recognition, her's had not been taken off Josephine, whose insensibility she envied. Although she moved and acted as a living creature, she felt a fitter subject for death, and would fain have wooed him softly to take her from such scenes for ever.

Josephine began to revive, and Edith endeavoured to gain a door, where she might escape, and leave her poor friend with the man she knew best, through the powerful voice of nature to convince, and haply, (oh! how she prayed for this consummation) his conversion to humanity,

probity, and duty. Her sight was dim, her eyes were weak, and Edith caught for support by every piece of furniture in her way; she reached the door, the hasp resisted her faint efforts, when Josephine suddenly exclaimed, "Alaric Elphinstone! where is he?"

She freed herself from his arm, and they stood confronting each other. Josephine stared wildly, and seemed as if her senses had forsaken her.

"I am here, madam!"

"Not thou."

"I never knew another name."

"'Tis false, deceiver! where's your friend? You hide beneath his cowl, he has taken thine."

"The woman's mad, and would make me so: Miss Leslie, is not that my name?"

Josephine directed a piercing glance at Edith. "It is, sir!" she murmured, and trembled as she spoke.

"I know you not," said Josephine; "have I dreamed? am I mad? let me examine," she whispered, assuming an attitude of thoughtfulness.

Edith raised her eyes to heaven ; " I am thankful ! Oh, blest assurance ! "

She had scarcely uttered these words when Josephine, starting from her reverie, raised her hand above her head, exclaiming : " Am I deaf, besides deranged and blind ? Hearken each of ye ! " She paused, and all a breathless silence kept.

" Again, again ! " she shrieked, and groans answered her from without.

Josephine rushed down the steps to the lawn, closely followed by Elphinstone.

Other sounds now brought Edith to a horrible scene. A man covered with blood—one side of his face shattered by the discharge of his gun, lay in agony upon the ground. Josephine bent over him, and in that disfigured countenance recognised her husband—Elphinstone, his friend—and Edith Leslie (could it be possible ?) yes—shocking to own—it was her cousin—Frederick de Winter !



## CHAPTER X.

And he, her stately idol, he, with  
Dark as the eagle's in a summer sky  
And darker curls, amid whose raven  
The very wild wind amorously del  
With that bright smile, which made  
So proud, so sweet—what part had  
And yet she loved him : who may  
To the fond heart that beats not at

Edith became dizzy—her strength  
had fallen, but that hand ever for  
the distressed, and especially for  
maiden's service, timely sustained  
with much embarrassment fearfully

Joy excessive! he read in her no longer averted face his forgiveness. He could not speak for happiness; his pulse throbbed against her's.

At the moment of her accepting Elphinstone's services, the chain she had given him escaped from its concealment, and dropped at her feet; discovering the true character of its possessor, Edith saw before her the same who had been twice the saviour of her life!

The gratitude of her look was returned by an expression of rapturous hope, which even in that day of terrible things lost nothing of its meaning.

The sounds and sights and events of the morning completely overcame Edith, and the doctor, who was summoned upon this melancholy occasion, divided his attention between the sufferers.

After a sleep induced by opium, our heroine awoke on the following day; her aching head confused and light, tried, and tried in vain, to direct her thoughts. For a while they were scattered and shadowy. She fancied she rode in



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with the happy angels who fluttered in her dream. This state of mind did not last long. Her cousin Frederick's case was too dreadful to permit of another subject engrossing her attention.

Disfigured for life, if not mortally wounded, his crime had been desperately punished. She saw the hand of retributive justice in this, and confessed the tremendousness of almighty displeasure.

On the preceding day, two individuals had ascended the steps together ; the demeanour of the foremost engaged her interest, and she did not observe the face of his companion. Poor Josephine was more quick-sighted. The guilty one evidently recognised her he had ruined, and endeavouring to make his escape before he should be discovered, in his haste fell, and the discharge of his gun from the concussion, completed his destruction. The hour was come when the iniquity of his life should be revealed ; the day of his doom was fixed ; the fierce arrows of vengeance were on the wing ; and flying from divine wrath,

he was overtaken and slain. Security for the guilty cannot last for ever. Edith shuddered when she reviewed the consequences of sin.

The words of a beloved friend, long since uttered, now came home to her. Little did Mary believe they would be fulfilled in the instance of her own brother—the last man Edith herself supposed could so grossly err : he did not seem like one familiar with vice.

Frederick's sister would suffer much on his account ; but most deeply for his soul's injury. Mary had some one to support her now, and to whom she could impart her sorrows, who would sympathize, nor let them weigh o'er heavily ; but Lady Hester—how would she bear the blow ? endure the crushing of her hopes, her pride, her love ? Her only son—the head of her house—the child of her affection—maimed, mutilated, his beauty spoiled, his identity doubtful—perhaps the entailed estate lost to her family for ever—at his heirless death consigned to another !

Edith remembered there was the little Alaric.



"Ah! too sanguine to hope his claims would be admitted—impossible! a different religion—a different name—he was too delicate to live—decline had already emaciated him. But suppose health returned to the boy, and the law establishing him in his patrimony, her aunt would hesitate to acknowledge a child of doubtful origin. Meanness of birth on the maternal side, (from which opinion once formed, sufficient testimony could hardly be found to dissuade her), would disqualify the son from having heirship after his father; his inbred lowness must sooner or later discover a taste for congenial company; and as a necessary consequence, Frederick's sister would be lost to society—Emma wed a serf, and the family would degenerate. Better, in Lady de Winter's estimation, it should set thus prematurely, than drag out an ignominious existence, and better truly," concluded Edith, "the child should die lamented, than live to be hated."

Having dwelt long upon the miserable portion of the late events, with their consequences, Edith

naturally sought for relief a cheering subject; and found—in admiration of the hero of Lodon Common, the ball, the beach, the dark night, and its dangers, and the witness with herself of yesterday's tragedy—sufficient to allay the irritation of her feelings.

Mary's judgment, Nelly's darker insinuations, and the Reardon's curse, belonged to another. She burned to tell the whole world her lover was innocent.

Ardent girl! she avowed her love too soon; from her lips, her cheeks, back to her heart the red blood rushed. She had a doubt—it grew stronger—it triumphed! His honour was compromised; he had screened his friend; he had lent his name to the deed! 'Twas impure from that instant. She could have nothing to do with Alaric Elphinstone; she must return to the days and nights of weeping she knew not when should end. She sued for peace, and found misery.

Poor Edith in the midst of her woe recollected

Josephine deserved the greater commiseration, and dressing, determined to seek her directly. Thinking to find her friend a watcher by the sick, she walked stealthily to the door, from whence issued the expressions of pain before noticed. It was opened by Josephine, who embraced Edith with a convulsive pressure: "Come in—you may—he sleeps now—he cannot hear—come in, pity and support me!"

Josephine's dress, the same she had on the morning previous, was disordered, and bore evident marks of having been worn throughout the night. Down her cheeks were channels that her tears had made; she had wept till the whites of her eyes became scarlet, in which their pupils faded. All besides was pallid and haggard as though years had elapsed since they met.

Edith returned her caress, as one kissing the dying leaves a clammy earnest on her lips, sure token they shall not long be separated; and as their fates were mingled, so their tears fell together.

The room was darkened and Edith sought not to distinguish the person of him who filled the couch. She had seen enough to take to the grave with her, nor lose one feature of the fearful spectacle.

"He cannot recover," whispered Josephine, as Edith's look inquired of her. "The inflammation has spread from the wounded side to the other; no friend or foe on earth would recognise him now. It has affected the brain; he raves,

talks of me, but says I am not his wife, and no child breathes to call him father! Oh! that he could forget me—utterly forget me! and remember his own soul—'tis time. I have prayed for this, but it must not be; in cleansing the one he will confess his crime; then am I interested in the safety of both—his immortal part, and my own fair fame. Such a night as I have spent! Man's inmost thought is very vile; his agony may excuse his words and his tortured conscience. What must he feel within, who speaks

as racked demons only can imitate! I endeavour to forgive him, Edith! I see much extenuation of his fault; his friend has the greater shame."

"How is that possible?" cried Edith tremulously.

She received in this remark of Josephine confirmation of her lover's guilt, and while she resigned him, was reluctant to allow his crime yet so heavy as Josephine determined. She saw in this desperate moment the lingering last of a wife's affection, blinding her judgment.

"I now believe he never wrote that letter which consigned me and my infant to exile and disgrace; his friend, beside granting his name to the foul deception, penned that nefarious epistle, and either advised my husband to the silent course he should pursue, or concealed the matter from him, and so overcame the time when he might have been reclaimed from his stray courses."

Edith could not but acknowledge Elphinstone

to a certain degree concerned in Josephine's distresses; at the same time, to satisfy herself of his weightier implication, she silently recapitulated the aggravating circumstances attending her cousin Frederick's conduct; and examined the tissue of dissimulation he had woven; introduced to Josephine under a feigned name—married under another—procuring false witnesses to combine with him—perseveringly maintaining his guise—and with vows of constancy on his

lips, pressing to a breast he knew perjured, the unsuspecting victim of his avarice—finally deserting, and never since seeking to learn her fate—regardless alike of her peace, her health, her honour, and her life. The whole was a plot, the result of premeditation, and of the wildest description—dire were its issues. What man could be more vile! What tongue could whisper his name! who could conceive worse mischief!

“But I forget,” Edith despondingly mused, “sages say there are many such; and thou too

art another ! Elphinstone, *thou* art leagued with him !”

She saw the world in all its naked deformity, and those utterly marred she would fain have believed virtue's fairest children. “Thine hand is stained,” she murmured, as she remembered Alaric, “thou canst not wash it out. Touch me no more ; love and hope are lost to me, and I am sinking.”

The whirlpool into which her ideas had been carried was stayed by Josephine's observing that Mr. Leslie had kindly promised to assist her in every way, and had already taken measures to inform his family of Mr. de Winter's accident. She expressed great uneasiness as to the result, knowing what an equivocal position she must hold in the sight of these relatives.

A moan from the couch attracted Josephine to the sick man's side. She bent down her ear, and attended for a while without speaking a word ; then in an agony of tears returned to Edith, and putting a pen into her hand : “Write,

Edith! if you love me, or wish to save me from contumely; be a witness to my innocence—note his disclosures; he wakes—he'll speak anon."

Edith did as she was desired, and resting the paper upon the bed, listened with a countenance expressive of extreme distress. She could not argue with Josephine at such a time, and convince her the depositions of a madman are valueless; but feeling that the nature and severity of the trials she had undergone rendered her unfortunate friend painfully alive to her situation, and anxious that if no one else should believe her tale true, at least Edith might acquire circumstantial evidence to the fact, and in the eyes of one being upon the earth she might stand forth as born to virtue—pure of purpose, but betrayed.

After a moment's recollection, a delicate consideration for Josephine's sensibilities caused Edith to hold the pen firmly, and appear as though she were acting on judicious authority. She gazed



fixedly upon her paper ; a deep pause succeeded, and Edith hoped her task might be delayed.

Josephine held her breath, when passing his hand over his face, (which, excepting a small portion was covered with bandages) his only remaining eye, partaking of the inflammation which had extended from the wounded side, was so much swoln as to preclude the perception of external objects.

The sufferer, low muttering, expressed himself in broken and yet connected terms.

“She cannot know me now—ha ! ha ! ha ! I defy her ! my secret is safe ! ’Twere impossible to recognise Eugene—Alaric Elphinstone in me ! Voice changes with years—mine is altered—she has no hold upon her wooer—the witless, the purblind nun ! A priest in France can’t marry as one in England—’twas an empty form that gave her none of the claims of a wife. Lucky revolution ! lucky night ! I deceived the old man ! I did well—Isabella Corbeau aided me—she dared not refuse—I had her in my power, she knew

it, and I took advantage of her sin to destroy myself eternally. What did I say? am I going mad?"

Here the spell of reason was broken, and the sick man raved in hideous language, such as Edith had never heard, nor could have been persuaded mortal lips could utter. Her ears tingled, her lips grew pale, and standing by his couch, their hands clasped, and eyes streaming, uplifted

**to heaven, the friends prayed for the wretched sinner.**

He was becoming more and more desperate; Josephine placed her hand on the bell, to summon Mr. Leslie and Power, should his violence require restraint.

With gentle firmness she arrested his hands when they were directed to tear asunder the bandages.

Edith, stunned and almost insensible, like a statue grew. A sudden commotion in the house, and one or more coming up-stairs, divided

Josephine's attention. She heard the voice of her little maid parleying with a visitor.

"Wait, great madam ; la ! ma'am an would you give my lady more to trouble her than enough. Let's do it easy, and tell my lady, and prepare the sick gentleman, for he's no that sane just now, and ye might be the killing of him at ance, much as ye wish him well and all."

This was carried on in a high key.

Just now the parties arriving at the door, Josephine's servant called the stranger's notice to the noise within, as confirmation of her assertions.

"Hark ye ! didn't I tell ye so ?"

These words were hardly uttered, than the door was burst open, and Lady Hester de Winter, without heeding the presence of Edith or Josephine, passed like a stormy wind, regarded for an instant her son's condition, and fell in screaming hysterics on the bed. Her voice pierced through the bandages that confined his ears, and the sufferer's demeanour changed.

"That's my mother," he cried, sitting up in

bed; "how merry she is to-night! darkness be-  
charms for her as well as for me. Yes! we will  
keep the boy-lord to his bargain. Charmour  
must wed Emma. I can hope no further assistance  
from Elphinstone. Mother mine! you are  
I must do it; his name helped me once.  
ought to be content with that. In an affair  
minor importance to you, I won't trouble you  
with this detail: all I can say is—we are not  
expect more, and ask nothing, or the lion may  
shake me from his mane like a dewdrop, and  
should be spilt. Do you understand me in the  
full sense of spill?"

Here he endeavoured to point his words with  
grimace, that gave him evident pain, and caused  
a hideous distortion of countenance.

Recovering he proceeded: "I would not look  
him as an acquaintance for a sacrifice; his introduc-  
tions are good—in their seasons, capital hunting  
shooting, and fishing at Elphindale—come when  
you will, and stay as long as you please, whether  
the master's at home or abroad. Your horse

well stabled, or his, if you like better to wear 'em. Always take your friends with you—no limitation as to number of the article—the cellar brimming—venison plentiful. What better recommendations to a friendship? We must be careful how we lose him. Miss Twizzle—Margaretty, as I call her, has had an accession of wealth lately. I think I told you before—her old uncle's golden leavings—dregs of the Indian ocean—she's worth thinking about, if Edith is coy. I must own I love the wealth of the one, while I have a hankering after the beauty! Frederick de Winter of Gwyn Dinas and Malvern Hall would read well, and sound pretty. The Twizzle has gold, but no whereabouts. I could buy that, to be sure; you will advise me. It will be a great thing, connexion with a peer! I have had some tough work with the old hound, and he badgered me sadly; but as badgers hard baited oft turn to advantage, I have given him some ugly scratches; and I conclude we shall remain on tolerably distant, and keep civil terms, till his wounds are

healed—when I expect he'll at it again; whelp is in awe of me. You have cautioned Emma to preserve his letters. This was prudence, though my confidence in her diplomacy rendered unnecessary the suggestion; however, as well to keep on the light side of the post; and he is not thin enough to hide in shadow, or sharp enough to escape the dog of the law."

Having said thus much, Frederick sank and after a few inward chuckles, fell asleep.

What a discourse for Josephine to hear! for Edith! light seemed to strike her from the anvil of the evil one, and she stared wildly at the room, as if discrediting her situation on earth.

Josephine, more versed in sorrow, with much sin, bore these disclosures, as one stone cannot ward off the blow, or weep more than nature has provided tears. During the time, her attentions to Frederick's mother continued unabated.

Lady Hester's hysterical clamour subsided into sobs and sighs, and with her return to reason, she begged to be taken to another room, and insisted on being left alone with her maid.

Of an energetic and masculine mind, upon receiving intelligence of her son's accident, Lady Hester wasted no time in unavailing grief; but, restraining her husband from accompanying her, telling him he should be sent for if she deemed it necessary, after a few hurried preparations, accompanied by Triste, she stepped into her carriage, and travelling night and day without intermission, accomplished the journey to Rosemount.

Lady Hester was received by Mr. Leslie in the apartment before alluded to; he detailed faithfully, and as consistently as the faint hope of his recovery would allow, the doctor's opinion of her son's case, reserving the lady Josephine's connection with that individual until a fitting opportunity.

Lady Hester maintained her equanimity

throughout, scarcely evinced impatience with the maid, who tardily led her to her child's room, and questioned her admissibility without previous announcement, and approval of her mistress; not until she had seen with her own eyes, heard with her ears, sufficient to justify her apprehensions, did her strength and resolution suddenly fail—as a bow snaps when overstrung.

While her mistress was engaged in the parlour with Mr. Leslie, Triste, making good her footing in the kitchen, gleaned, in an astonishingly short time, certain beads of history, which she strung together with the art of an adept, and prepared for her mistress's private ear. When Joseph, the little maid, running into the kitchen, proclaimed the high lady's state of health, Triste, hastening to her side, overheard her young master's language, endeavoured by every art in her power, and raising diverting noises, to drown any revelation he might make, or so obscure the sound as to render the sense dubious. To this end she employed loud demands for remedies, and busied



much in their application. Her explosions of sorrow on account of the state of both mother and son were boisterous and incessant, and when her mistress began to revive, the most shrill and discordant expressions of her delight and satisfaction almost occasioned Lady Hester a relapse.

The faithful domestic, however, failed in her object. Josephine's interest in the man assisted her to overcome these difficulties, and Edith was abstracted from every deed and word, but those *he* syllabled, the actions *he* described.

When alone with her mistress, Triste improved the time in detailing all she had heard, and pointed out the "strange lady—madam Josephine—as Mr. Frederick's reputed wife, and that there was a child in the case, who was kept out of the way, for the present, by Mr. Elphinstone, who was god-father to him, as some thought. The same Mr. Elphinstone was deep in the secret, that was come to be no secret at last; since every gilly about the place had it on the tips of their tongues."

Lady Hester writhed in absolute torture at this avowal. She saw that in the event of her son's recovery, an union that would neither aggrandize nor reflect credit on her family—no money—no name—no connexion. She caught a panting hold upon her Abigail's statement of what she had heard, namely, that Madam Josephine was a Roman Catholic, who had been brought to retract by the clergyman of the parish. In this case she saw no legal claim upon her son, and resolved to oppose, to the utmost of her power, restitution of the woman's rights.

The plan to be adopted required study, and remaining where she was, pleading the necessity of repose, Lady Hester sent Triste to prosecute further inquiries. She was sorry that Edith should have overheard Frederick's expressions with regard to herself, but her grief in this matter was allayed by the consideration that Edith (country girl as she was) would not be prevailed upon to marry a man with but one eye. She hated Edith from the moment she came to this

conclusion. His unfortunate blemish would mar her son's prospects—it was decidedly against him. He must hope to succeed no longer by good looks. Upon dress, and address, and his standing in society must be grounded his success for the future. Would it had been in a duel he had been maimed! The circumstances of the present case were so unsatisfactory! A similar accident might have occurred to a poacher, a gamekeeper, or any common individual! The former was an aristocratic mode of receiving damage. Her brother had killed his man; 'tis true he was expatriated on this account, and never appeared happy afterwards. Still, his courage mounted over the grave of his peace, and people abroad were very civil to Lord Holford, for if they did not love, they feared him.

After a few more accessions of fuel to her pride, through the diligent Triste's tenders, Lady Hester assuming her most commanding look and manner, undid the door, and entering her son's apartment, gave Josephine to understand, in an

authoritative tone, that she might withdraw, for his mother preferred watching by her child's couch.

Josephine unable on the instant to reply, Edith, in accents of genuine surprise, exclaimed: "My dear aunt is not equal to the task, nor does she know its anxieties; and after such a journey, it would be very cruel of Josephine and myself—two young people—to allow Lady Hester in this manner to overtax her strength. Dear aunt! let me persuade you to retire."

"Don't talk nonsense, Miss Leslie; I can't think you are acting over modestly in becoming chamber-maid to a young, unmarried man. I will not permit similar disregard of decorum in my presence."

"Aunt!" said Edith, crimsoning to the very roots of her hair, "I am with Josephine, and she is Frederick's"—— Edith hesitated: "there can be no harm surely if Josephine permits me I don't like to be in this place—indeed I do not—for I am obliged to hear what infinitely

distresses me, but I am loath to leave poor Josephine."

"'Tis enough; you have my commands—retire instantly with your friend."

"Madam," returned Josephine, firmly, "I am not prepared to obey you."

"To my face this insolence? As his mother, proud stranger! I am first in authority here. Depart!"

"As his wife," replied Josephine, "I have an equal claim to be near him. No man dare separate us."

"Woman!" said Lady Hester, boiling with rage, "what witness have you to this presumptuous statement? I say 'tis false."

"*He* knows it true!" said Josephine, pointing to heaven, "and *he* will aid me to vindicate my rights."

"Maniac! do you still persist? You shall lodge in bedlam before to-morrow's night. My son is not married. Fool! to tempt me so!"

"Your ladyship's son is my husband."

"Imposition  
sermon. Edith  
this person is  
to society!  
grade our sex  
destruction.  
Spent there,  
female!"

Edith flew  
the poor Jose

"I am so  
"to have no  
intemperance,  
must remain  
on me. Our  
thoughts are  
carelessly spe  
side, I feel h  
hope that he  
and (it may  
eyes?"

"Silence!

words come tainted on thy breath. My nephew draws near. I advise thee, haste !”

“I cannot accede to your wishes, with deference for your relation to this unfortunate man ; if it so please you, madam, we will watch together. Lady Hester de Winter, I must bear you company.”

Her black dishevelled hair—her tall commanding form—the calm dignity of her tone—her steady, but downcast eyes, beneath which sorrow gravely sat—rendered Josephine’s mien impressive, and a marked contrast to that of Lady Hester, whose eyes stared and flashed upon her—her mouth and nostrils, her hands and arms were in motion, menacing, as her words and attitude. Excitement affected her breathing, which came and went noisily, and with haste.

Edith’s father approached, and Lady Hester addressed him in the same tone she had used to Josephine : “Mr. Leslie, I charge you, remove this woman hence—I care not whither—so she never more foul my sight.”

are visitors; and I recog-  
nize from her the place  
sick man."

"Heaven and ——!"

"Hush!" said Mr. Le-  
gend.

"Yes! ye all are leagu  
present I must submit  
upon me till my son's r  
will cast out the pestiles  
his mother!"

To leave the room now  
strued into an acknowle  
precedence; an error it  
let gain ground; besides



make, prejudicial to her interests, and if possible to give his wandering ideas a harmless turn.

Lady Hester, seating herself close to the invalid's couch, preserved a sullen silence, nor looked again at another face than that, a heap of bindings more than half concealed.

She thought  
In passion's  
It had been  
The shadow

Immediately  
Mr Leslie order  
and embracing  
charging Pow  
arrive at the  
assured Lady  
till circumstan

In her own  
to those kind

who were but too happy to receive her on any terms.

Lady Willoughby clasped the young girl to her bosom, and seeing those beautiful eyes swollen with weeping, her cheeks glazed with tears, pressed Edith to confide her care, and promised to be her support and tenderly to advise. In a passion of feeling, she unburdened her whole heart, detailed her trials, and told her love from its dawn to its setting. Pity wept with her, and affection glowed in Lady Willoughby's breast, warmer and more warm towards her youthful friend. She saw new beauties at every turn; our heroine's knowledge of right commanded her respect—the purity and ingenuousness of her disposition excited her admiration.

Elphinstone had been before-hand in his confessions, and Lady Willoughby now knew their love was mutual.

It was this had caused that apparent waywardness of character which displeased his friends; this, unrequited, had, by lowering his health and

great revolution in his  
communicate to his relations  
been given him; and he  
declared the suffering  
Lady Willoughby more  
upon his name cast to  
summation than else.

She commended him  
other course she could

Her astonishment  
was not less than her

Here was a young  
his friends and held  
portion who formed  
he served, and the con-  
sidered an honour to  
horizon, which was ear-  
of fulfilling a higher

seen fast rising to distinction, he was one of the first people in whom she would have placed confidence, and the last she would have suspected. But so Edith had thought of Frederick, and Lady Willoughby had in the world met with many such anomalies; why might not Elphinstone swell the number?

Although she carefully refrained from telling the result of her meditations to Edith, the more Lady Willoughby reflected on the circumstances of the case, the more seriously she was induced to condemn her nephew, and found evidences to confirm her in her belief of the duplicity of his conduct; one portion of which was—that she had frequently heard him allude to his first meeting with de Winter in Paris, on his return from a continental tour. The circumstances of that meeting were carefully concealed, and the time of its occurrence exactly answered to the date of Josephine's marriage and to that of the revolution. She groaned, and admitted her suspicions of

Alaric—her husband's favourite nephew—his only sister's child.

He had been left an orphan at an early age and inherited a large fortune—for youth, a dangerous key to temptations, and often used by the possessor to the prejudice of his character.

"The beginnings of vice are usually small—he has made a commencement—he is guilty."

So Lady Willoughby concluded her sorrowful judgment.

Josephine's tale greatly interested Sir Leona and Lady Willoughby. Ever desirous of alleviating the woes of the distressed, they resolved not to lose sight of Edith's friend, and Edith felt happy in being the repository of this assurance, knowing how much Josephine needed support. She rejoiced her papa had sent her to the Grove if it were only for this.

Quickly discovering the place of her retreat, Elphinstone came to the Grove, expecting to see her he loved. In vain he sought—he found h

not. At length emboldened to express his object, the young man asked to be permitted an interview with Miss Leslie.

Lady Willoughby answered this appeal by telling of what he was suspected ; the eagerness of his manner changed, all colour forsook him, and he walked from her presence silent and dejected. In a few moments more, he was heard tapping at Sir Leonard's study. The door opened, they were closeted together a short space, when orders were given to saddle horses, and without remaining to inform the ladies of their plans, the gentlemen disappeared. They were no more heard of that night.

On the morrow, Edith wended her way through the shrubberies ; her mind was occupied with the events of the preceding day ; the cawing of the rooks over head, and the creaking of the trees, as they were bowed in a heavy wind—sounds she was wont to dwell upon—were unheeded now. On stepping stones she crossed a brook, nor

paused to admire the silver flood, whose foam frosted her toe tips.

Edith walked rapidly, as flowed the current of her thoughts: still, as she distanced the house, she fancied a voice pursued she remembered well; surely it came nearer and nearer—it broke the imagination of her dream, she knew 'twas some one seeking her, and stopped for breath, and to answer.

“Edith, Edith!” persisted her pursuer.

“Edgar Levison!” she cried, springing towards a young man who issued from beneath a spreading beech, “can it be possible? is it even you?”

“My self—the very same,” he replied, kissing her hands and forehead.

“How is Mary?”

“Well, but sad. She sent me to see as much as I may of her poor brother; but first to congratulate her beloved cousin upon the odium so long attached being taken from the character of Alaric Elphinstone.”



Her eyes filled with tears; Edith broke from him, and flying hid herself within the house. This strange conduct was soon accounted for, by Lady Willoughby's detail of what remained at her nephew's charge, and Levison pursued his course, sorrowing the more for what he had just earned.

## CHAPTER XII.

Sank his voice to mutter'd breath,  
The tale of sorrow, sin, and death.

L. E. L.

Not many hours after the resolution she had taken—a stranger to watching by a sick couch—overcome with the fatigues she had encountered, and the violent explosions of temper she had indulged, Lady Hester gradually drooped, and finally resting her head on the nearest pillow, fell into a heavy slumber. Josephine compassionately regarding her enemy, cautiously moved, fearful of waking her ; arranged the dress to the greater comfort of the sleeper, and shut out

every beam of light which might offend her eyelids. She bore no resentment towards her patient's mother, although at her hands she had received stripes that could not be forgotten, nor cease to smart.

How was Josephine altered since the day she had revenged herself upon her convent companion, who impugned, nay, denied, the salvation of her father ! Dead was the vindictive spirit she long had cherished towards the superior Sœur Ursule, and Madame Corbeau, who had assisted at her ruin. She forgave each, she pitied and prayed for them. Religion had done much for Josephine ; christian charity and forbearance she understood and practised.

At length the hour arrived for examining and dressing the wounds of the unfortunate man. Notwithstanding the noise, and frequent exclamations of the sufferer, during this trying operation, Lady Hester remained undisturbed.

With intense solicitude Josephine awaited the



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Exhausted by the operation, de Winter slept beside his mother, and the departure of his professional attendant left Josephine sole watcher in that melancholy chamber.

A terrible suspense was endured by the disowned wife. She felt indescribably anxious for the waking moments of mother and son. Which should first recognise her? how should she be received by each? She had no hope of mercy from either. She prayed unceasingly for both, and desired power might be given them from above to distinguish their errors, and repent betimes; for herself she petitioned patience and resignation to the will of heaven, in whatever trials were yet to be dispensed.

The softness of the woman and the firmness of the christian were finely blended in her character. She regarded every muscular contraction of de Winter's mouth, and augured from the shortness of the spell, or its delay, whether pain of body or conscience stung him.

The restless sleeper writhed and tossed at



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and dr  
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He reached his hand—she took it in silence, and he raised his body from the bed. She let the pale hand fall, nor stirred, nor closed her eyes from that face.

“Josephine,” again he whispered, and in a louder tone, “summon witnesses—awake my mother—she’s here—she sleeps at the wrong hour!” He leaned upon his elbow, and gasped for breath. Josephine mechanically drew the bell-wire between her fingers. She sat down—tears relieved her. She became more sensible, and rising, opened the door to Mr. Leslie.

At one glance he understood for what he was required, but before he entered, called from the staircase to some one below.

“The time is arrived—come in—be still, and our Father grant that innocence may rejoice!”

This he said, addressing two gentlemen, who replied to his summons; the elder caught his arm, exclaiming, “Ghost! how camest thou hither?”

Mr. Leslie perceived the unusual disturbance

of his friend ; and leading him to a seat, the man crouched in a remote corner, and his groans told where he hid.

Answering the finger of the sick man, the stranger, with his hand in his breast, stole to the foot of the bed, and bent his eyes to the sheets that vied with him in paleness.

"Awake my mother," said de Winter in a voice that made each one assembled there start, and repine that the stillness was broken. Hester heard the words, and rousing from slumber, Mr. Leslie whispered : "Mada—calm—pray command yourself—your son will speak."

Her chagrin and horror were extreme. She found herself the last sleeper in that room before numbers awakened. She beheld him, and was awed into silence by the air of grimness and command one half his face assumed.

De Winter spoke : "Before I learn whether I am to live or to die, accept my confession. It will neither be added to, nor can be retract-



would spite the fiend who led me into sin—the cast-out spirit that tutors men to secrecy, which at the last he makes his greatest engine of torment. A glimpse of the rack I have had in my dreams—the bare sight has extorted the facts ye seek.”

“Be careful how you commit yourself, my son! you may live many years yet, in that case I counsel you, heed me.”

“Silence, mother!” sternly commanded de Winter. “I must impose silence on you now, nor deem I speak too harshly, or very irreverently address my parent. Would that you had stifled my crimes when they were young, nor nursed them by your folly. Forgive an undutiful son! you never taught duty or wisdom; when bells rung at my birth, and glad was my mother that an heir to her house was born, little she dreamed, in that hour of triumph, the babe she bore should turn out a disgrace to the same family. Behold him here, on this pallet of agony, a miserable and fugitive wretch, who would fly from vengeance,

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cause. But to my tale—ere I die and leave it unfinished. I shall die—I think—I feel—soon—soon.

“The better to carry out my plans, I professed hypocritical affection for the priestly office, and chusing the name of Eugene, prepared myself with apparent zeal for my acceptance in the Romish church. As a convert to “the faith,” I was flattered and petted; favours were heaped upon me, my name went abroad, and I was received with honour wherever I chose to go. So well did I dissemble.

“Accident gave me admission to the convent, which I had hoped to acquire only by taking the vows of a priest. I succeeded in my love (call you it?) The revolution broke out—timely for me; I wiled her from the sanctuary, and here comes the black seal upon my guilt. And all of ye! it concerns me much this lady should know what I was, and see what I now am, suffering for my sin—dearly, justly suffering. She is my wife—my very only wife in the sight of heaven. I dare not deny the

fact, and a holy  
I deceived him

“Madame Is  
own husband,  
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rious scheme.

“Eugene s  
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whatever I might invent—she stood in so much awe of me, aware I was the repository of her cher ami's secret—well apprized of her infamy— anxious to be relieved of a spy, and to make me to a certain amount her debtor.

“When I required the fulfilment of our compact on that night, (the blackest of my life!) this woman introduced me as her son's friend—a youth I had little knowledge of, and who was then absent from Paris; therefore unable to answer an appeal, if preferred, but known to the priest as a serious and steady lad, and respected accordingly.

“Isabelle completed the task I had set her, by witnessing to the name I had appropriated”——

Here Alaric Elphinstone, (for it was *he* who stood at the foot of the bed) raised his eyes, and his cheeks fired—his lips were compressed as with anger.

“Yes, Elphinstone,” said Frederick, regarding him steadfastly, “I polluted your name—stole

your passport from your room, at the same place where we first met, and with this ready assistance accomplished my gross desires. We met each other but slightly—accident brought us together—we were the only Englishmen in the house. After the day this robbery was committed I never saw you, till we met at the ball—at the ball—when for the first time I learned your relationship to Sir Leonard Willoughby.

De Winter paused, and drawing a long agonizing breath: "I claim your attention a little longer—but a little—mark my words and state here honestly, and as distinctly as my worst faced enemy will allow—I know nothing of this young man, but what reflects a glory on him. He is innocent of the remotest participation in my sin; he is an honour, whilst I am a discredit, to my sex."

The present was not a time for blushing at the sound of praise; Elphinstone's countenance cleared; he threw back the curls from his forehead and turned to his elder friends with a look

triumphant emancipation. In their presence, that was restored which had been cruelly taken away—but not lost—his character. He was inexpressibly happy; he advanced to take Frederick's hand, to thank him for his candour.

“Handle me not, Elphinstone! you would contaminate yourself; my tongue is weak—my strength fast fails—I desire to make the most of the short space heaven has allowed. Be careful how you hinder me. Oh, Josephine! my wife! mother of my child! what restitution can I offer you? Blameless, only too fond, relying woman! Beware ye, her sisterhood! how ye yield yourselves to man! Trust not easily, or too surely! else ye find confusion; and above all things foster secret love for no man! Only the honest face, the open brow, and candid soul, should have your admiration.

“Well aware of the difficulty of marriage in the French Catholic Church, of two such doubtful individuals, foreigners, I pressed ardent love and violent circumstances, swore that she who stood

oration or baptism, was  
instances, depending upon  
surety, he sanctioned the  
benediction. Through the  
(a man of influence) I passed  
for my wife. I took her  
remained, preserving my  
England by my mother.

of her darling finished—  
ghastly grinned—"finding  
she recommended matrimony  
suitable to my station and

"I left Josephine at a time  
my tenderest attentions; I  
other pleasures—other scenes  
excess of profligacy, re-



talents for her support, sought to learn no more of the guileless one I had betrayed. Now I reaped the advantages of my falsehood; she was ignorant of my real name, and could not trace my family. I was going to add to her wrongs by marriage to another. Shall I, can I hope for pity from my fellow creatures, who have so grossly betrayed them? or dare I expect mercy should I die? No, no, no!" and the sick man loudly raved.

"My poor boy," remarked Lady Hester, "has been speaking at random ever since his frightful accident;" and here, in a grave and solemn tone, she called upon the Almighty to grant him sanity at leisure to correct his depositions, all of which she professed to accept as the fruits of an diseased imagination.

"Madam, do you doubt this lucid statement? it agrees with what I was already cognizant of," continued Mr. Leslie, colouring, "nor can one beside question its verity. Lady Hester's overweening partiality for her son has obscured her

senses; this is the only argument we may allow, by which she might be excused. I have a duty to perform towards Frederick de Winter, a trustee and witness of the only amends he can make to this much injured female and her child—my wards from henceforth.”

“Yes, much injured; right, truly so,” said a voice from the corner.

Lady Hester indignantly replied: “The child he speaks of is another man’s: the woman, if so good, had another husband. She surely cannot identify this disfigured person, and claim him for so near a relation!”

Josephine, who had remained silent during the whole trying scene, upon this assertion rose and quitting the chamber, presently returned with her infant in her arms, placed him on the bed, and addressing Lady Hester: “Madam, you remember your son in his fairer days—was he like this child?”

Lady Hester turned from the little witness. She could not help acknowledging to herself

the extraordinary likeness, but was obstinate in maintaining her former opinion before the assembly.

"This was a gift intended for his mother; your son, declaring his parent to be no more, gave it me."

Lady Hester beheld the portrait of her son, and groaned to find every art she tried was going against her. That portrait was an elder image of the delicate child.

Frederick, whose violence had been shortly overpowered by a sleep of insensibility, which held him all this while perfectly motionless, now as suddenly awoke to action and consciousness. Instantly perceiving the child: "He is mine!" he cried, and with vehemence catching his mother's arm, exclaimed: "Your son is there! Acknowledge him ere I die, cursing thee. Quick, quick!"

"Frederick!" said Lady Hester, soothingly, "calm yourself, I conjure you, my son!"

"Look at *him*  
ter, and fainted  
his eye was dim  
a father, nor a  
but for a devil

Now indeed  
prepared for an  
on the corpse ;  
accents called  
return to his  
agree with all,  
She grew frant  
the room.

Since Levis  
mained in her  
Josephine's int  
upon their joir  
time till evenin  
yet more. It  
disturbed by  
loughby, whose  
joyous.

Edith regarded her friend inquiringly, at a loss to account for a demeanour so averse from this lady's sympathetic disposition and her own sorrowful mood.

"Edith, my dear, my love!" she exclaimed, extending both hands, "come with me; I would introduce you to a valued friend of mine—once an esteemed acquaintance of yours."

Edith passively obeyed her guidance towards a large drawing-room, the entrance of which banished all objects from her mind—but one; that, as a spectre stood alone and terrible.

She attempted to lean for support on Lady Willoughby's arm—to Edith's surprise, she had withdrawn.

Momentarily expecting her return, our heroine gazed round, half in confusion, half in fear.

That splendid pier-glass reflected her agitated countenance, and tell-taled the workings of her soul. She could not bear this scrutiny longer, and avoiding her other self, turned to seek a chair and await Lady Willoughby's guest.

A faltering step of another's presence emerged from the shadows. Edith recognised him. He embodied the affection she had retreated as he approached.

"Haste not, I falteringly spoke, father."

The words had been stationary. He took it and read:-

"If you love me, the stone is worthy; union."

The paper dropped. Her look assured her that he had spoken to his heart, exclusively.

Oh! the intensity of their love trials each had undergone.

y gazed in each other's faces, and kissed, and  
ught so. The utterance of words was too  
ch besides. Smiles, and tears, and embraces  
e all expressive, and only fit for such a  
ment.

- His, and

The lovers spoke  
confidence, re-  
each, that all ren-  
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bring them closer  
a holier fire—to  
embrace to their at-

The history of  
at Mr. Leslie's  
passion, was, at



dwelt upon in Edith's hearing, and acquired many incidental additions, forgotten in the haste and anxiety of clearing his character from the imputations against it, untowardly cast, and the mystery with which it had been shrouded.

Now Edith learned their first meeting on Lodon Common took place after Elphinstone's return from a continental tour, upon the conclusion of his studies at Oxford, and while he waited for a promised commission.

Hunting with a party of friends from Fern Park, the Earl Ratcliff's, he met with what he ever after deemed a lucky accident. Immediately upon his recovery, and before he could search out and acknowledge his debt to his benefactress, he was appointed to a regiment on the eve of embarkation for the east, compelled to join, and when abroad, made aide-de-camp to an uncle commanding in India.

As soon as he could throw up this appointment, contrary to the express desires of his friends,

(whose influence was considerable in the profession he was about to abandon) desirous of returning to the spot where his first love was born, whither his thoughts would not be restrained from carrying him—our hero retired from the army; and in seeking his mistress, found, he believed, her grave, and mourned as for one dead.

In a measure to engage his mind, he sought popularity, offered himself for the county in which his estates were situate, and was unanimously elected to its representation. His parliamentary career had but shortly begun, when he was again disturbed by the vision of his love, at a ball at his uncle Willoughby's; who, on that occasion, presented him as heir to his Devonshire property.

Thwarted in his advances—with the handkerchief that chronicled her name, and her withered bouquet in his bosom—without another cheering companion, or a pleasing hope—he wandered like a fugitive on the earth, unhappy,

ill, and half distracted with the blasting of his young prospects, preserving a moody silence towards his relatives, and at variance with the world—never examining into the cause of his rejection by Edith, convinced, from the witness in his own mind, that his passion was perceived and unpleasant to her family, nay, to herself.

During the evening that succeeded his return to favour, Levison, who could scarcely contain his satisfaction at the turn events had taken, sought repeated opportunities of shaking hands with his friend, and expressing his hearty congratulations, and making all amends in the power of language for the doubts he had permitted of Elphinstone's honour, declaring in exculpation of himself, that others were deceived as well—there had appeared so much of waywardness in his friend's conduct, which was now ably construed.

He was foremost to confirm de Winter's statement, recollected perfectly Elphinstone's having often referred to the inconvenience occasioned by

the loss of his passport, keeping him an unwilling spectator of the horrors of the Revolution.

Levison put on mourning for his brother-in-law, but secretly rejoiced in his conviction having set free his friend, and made Edith happy, whom, next to his own Mary, he loved best on earth.

And now approached an event that gave our heroine exquisite pleasure ; nor was she the only interested person—all those who loved her, and whom she loved, were deeply concerned.

After the removal of Lady Hester from her son's corpse, Mr. Leslie retired with our hero from the scene of death. They were shortly engaged below stairs in discussing matters of moment to both ; and so soon as the ardent young man had received permission, forgetting his kind uncle in the anxiety of the moment, he fled alone from the cottage, in haste to fling himself at Edith's feet.

Sir Leonard Willoughby remained sitting in the dark corner he had taken on his entrance to the room ; he heard the last desperate words of

the unhappy man, caught the last sigh that escaped in death, then beheld the patient and sorrow-stricken Josephine close the eyes and weep over that pale face ; in a storm of woe she clasped the little Alaric to her bosom, and sobbed and moaned, till an echo arose. Sir Leonard mourned with her. She had forgotten his presence, and was startled at the sounds. He saw her agitated surprise, and, rising, approached the twice widowed. He took her hand in his, nor could speak for some moments.

He shook, like a rocked wall, and cried aloud, "my child !" At length he uttered : " I believe you are my own—my only one ! my long lost child ! Dora, Dora ! say, is it so ?"

There was something in his words that waked a secret, long silent chord, that thrilled through her very soul.

" I know that name—'twas mine ! my father !"

She reposed in his arms in a blissful swoon.

Sir Leonard conveyed his two children to the

Grove, and presented them to his wife, as a son by him, if not his by nature.

Zealous and instant efforts were made to establish the identity of his child, and her claim to her mother, the Lady Dora's name, the same which she was christened. Happy success crowned the father's hopes; high premiums obtained the prize. She was entered in the convent's books under this name; her mother's was there, and her father, represented as an officer in the navy, supposed to have been killed in a mutiny of his men.

In days before, Sir Leonard had searched in vain to discover the dwelling-place of his girl; that she was still alive, he believed, and his prayers were always directed to this end. His mother, the daughter of an Irish peer, who had married in his thoughtless youth for love, had considered her opposite creed; and who, passionate and wilful, accepted the young sailor on the same terms, both married contrary to the advice of the friends of each; he doubted

when she heard the false account of her husband's death, lest his family should claim and convert her, that Lady Dora had placed this child beyond their reach, and died, preserving a determined silence upon the subject.

He returned in bodily health to find himself a widower and childless.

After the lapse of several years, Sir Leonard married a second time, an amiable Protestant lady, and was consoled for all but the loss of his daughter. This he mourned continually; and Lady Willoughby, whose husband's griefs became her own, joined her prayers and tears with his.

The recognition of her rosary, her mother's gift, produced a thousand painful recollections, as it brought with it the image of the dead, which had so forcibly struck him upon his first entrance to the sick man's chamber, when he believed his Dora's ghost was present to his senses.

Another circumstance added much to the remarkable nature of her restoration; Sir Leonard

remembered the gold snuff-box as the booty of his honourable enemy de Saza, when he was taken prisoner on the outset of his career, some years previous to his first marriage. This explained part of the interest the old man took in the little Josephine, whose history he must have known through his relation with the convent, and he presented this memorial probably with the view of establishing her identity, should she hereafter be claimed by any of the family of Willoughby.

Edith met her friend with joy, she exulted in her happy fortune, and Alaric Elphinstone regarded his cousin Dora with a fraternal affection not lessened by the knowledge she was heiress to that wealth else intended for him ; he had enough nor desired more. The former promise of his uncle's estates had been met with the following answer : " I hope, sir, I shall never inherit a gold ; it would not compensate me for the mourning I should have to wear."

Abhorring every object by which she was surrounded, Lady Hester was yet obliged to al-



the inquest upon the body of her son, before she could quit Rosemount, carrying with her his mangled remains. When this most painful liberty was granted, she returned, broken spirited, to Gwyn Dinas, and hastened to hide, in the family vault, the last trace of him she once had gloried in calling its heir.

Apprehensive of success, if delayed, the bereaved mother devoted her declining energies to pushing the suit between her elder daughter and young Lord Charmouth.

Alas! her prophecy with regard to herself seemed fast fulfilling; the world and its engines were all against her.

A few days after arriving at home, she was sent for to Emma's room, and there found her daughter in fits, supposed to be produced by the malaria of a certain letter that lay beside her; as Triste avowed, "after her mistress had read it, she went off." The letter claimed Lady Hester's first attention. She perused the fatal billet, and

was seized with a like sympathetic disorder. The letter alluded to ran as follows:—

“I pray, Miss de Winter, you will not importune me. Of marriage I have no remotest idea; and without the consent of my father, you know, as well as myself, the thing is impracticable. I dare not form such an alliance. I am sorry for your brother's accident, though so as it occurred when shooting in one of the preserves. The same day I was called away to attend upon my father, and did not witness the occurrence.

“Pray accept my presented condolences. I believe me, as ever,

CHARMOUTH

Upon their return to sensibility, mother and daughter were closetted together for many days, deliberating whether it would be better to sue Charmouth with an action, or to let the matter drop.

The pros and cons were perplexing. At

Emma produced the few letters she had extorted from his lordship, and upon re-perusal of their contents, it was decided the evidence was useless ; they were cold, flat, in a word, unlover-like !

She had laboured in vain ; her redundant and over-amatory epistles had successively fatigued, cloyed, and sickened, without exciting in him the return she desired.

It was evident his heart was no more in the matter than her's. On this point the only difference between them was, that he did not strive to hide his feelings, whilst her's melted away and disappeared altogether in the warmth of the envelope.

Elphinstone, the solitary and unwilling witness of the compact, had probably forgotten the whole affair, or might think fit to deny it, or state what would be equivalent, that he suspected Charmouth was forced to make a solemn asseveration when under the influence of wine.

This would tell against them in a court of justice ; although damages might be given, the

publicity of the affair, without satisfaction such they sought, would aggravate their misfortune.

After a mournful eulogy upon the departed Frederick, who, had he lived, would have brought the affair to the proper conclusion, Lady Hester and Emma separated to dwell in private on their misfortunes.

The frustration of her ambitious schemes, the prostration of her vanity, and annihilation of her hopes, threw Emma into a nervous fever, from which her recovery was slow.

A few years made a severe alteration in her whole mien; the shaving of her head was succeeded by a scanty crop, intermixed with grey hairs; her flesh shrank from her bones, and she shrewdly spoke from her lips; she was no longer the match sought, nor one admired; even poor men and men acknowledged deficient in taste, ceased not to molest her.

Lady Hester's age began to tell rapidly; neglecting her appearance, she shrivelled into an old woman. Triste was of little service; she

her influence decline, stole her mistress's jewels—was tried, convicted, and perished miserably in a foreign land.

With the loss of her two elder children, for Lady Hester already looked upon Emma as a cypher, the mother professed all affection for little Mary, and lavished favours upon the daughter who had brought credit to her family. In her day of state, she, who would have recoiled from the appellation as offensive and premature of "grandmamma," now took evident interest in Mary's nursery, and the baby heir of Levison became her pride.

Miss Dorothea Macklin, an acknowledged admirer of children—rich, and without a relative beside her sister, bespoke the first little girl of Mary Levison as heiress to her wealth: it was thought Miss Macklin could not do better than select another from the same family.

Mr. Jones, when not disabled by gout, or wine, danced his grandson to the tune of "dom-dom-diddle-dum-diddle-idle"—taught him to whistle,

and many other minor accomplishments, in which old men delight to show their expertness and zeal for youthful reminiscences.

There were few who took greater pleasure in the happiness of Mary and Edgar than the honest squire of Bettws Court; and deep was their concern upon hearing he had suddenly departed life, having continued addicted to immoderate potations of essential spirit.

His death had a salutary effect upon Mr. Jones who resolved not to increase his absorption with his years, and took every opportunity of teaching the young Edgar that "wine was very bad for little boys."

## CHAPTER XIV.

Both were young and both were fair :  
 She with her shower of golden hair,  
 Falling like flowers, and her bright blue eye,  
 Like the sparkling wave the oar dashes by ;  
 And he with lip and brow as fine  
 As the statues his country has made divine.

L. E.

Though late in the autumnal season,  
 winter at hand, the morning was sunny and  
 the birds caroled cheerily, and the ever-bloom-  
 ing furze reared its dewy tufts to the azure  
 offering a golden tribute to the monarch of  
 who inhaled the odour with beaming  
 descension, and distributed some of its con-  
 fessions around, that mingled fragrantly with  
 voices of other flowery courtiers.

Acknowledging his vivifying influence, the vessels were unlocked to his gaze, and came to his gardening care; the germs of future crops were prepared against the first wind that the sower going forth on his farm, should scatter and plant them.

The moss sprang beneath their feet, and the lovers sped joyously over Lodon Common.

Once again on the scene of their first meeting, and beholding the spot, Edith repeated Mr. T's words, the barmaid of the Pipe and Trough, explaining "as how his horse fell in a hole, and tumbled the poor gentleman off, when the frightened animal ran away after the fall, and nothing had happened."

Alaric took a rosy kiss from his lovely, and blessed that day and this.

The landscape, clothed with variety, and with colour; even the fern looked rich and green, embrowned with the first frost of the year, as it aged. Their countenances in the morning, were radiant with hope, and



never thought a sentence so sweetly spoken as "my own Nelly!" It came musical and ardent from his charmer's lips, whilst her lily finger pointed the cottage that held her nurse.

Something of envy possessed him, and he asked whether she could not pronounce his name as harmoniously.

Edith archly smiled. "You forget how long Nelly and I have been friends; perhaps by and bye, if you strive very, very hard to teach me, I may succeed in subduing the consonants, or substitute a little pet name of my own that will do."

"Love!" suggested Alaric.

"An impromptu—how clever!" laughed the light-hearted girl; "but here we are at Nelly's home."

"And here ye are!" cried the old lady.

She met them at her cottage-door. "At home, in my bosom, my darling again! my child, my jewel, my pearl! No oyster so precious as these old arms while clasped around her. My heart's

piece was slack till ye came. I feel the sap rising anow. And is this he thou shalt bless, the well-favoured youth himself! the diver with the gift from fairy-land to tell him where to find thee! my son, and my daughter!"

Tears of proud rapture stood in Elphinstone's eyes that were dazzled with the scene before him. He was addressed, he came within a hand's breath of Nelly: "Kiss her again for me," she said, resigning Edith to his embrace; "she's

thine, and may those glorious heavens bless thee; recorded above are prayers of mine to that end. May ye live and never die! may this world be a pleasant garden—a passage to a better! Oh, my children, see that ye meet me there." She took their joined hands in her's: "At the meeting of the waters in the Vale of Avoca, no streams unite fairer than these! no arch embraces their flood with more fealty than this aged one. The grisled pile may cast a shadow, but remember! that reflects the beauty and fathoms the purity of the flow. I would not stay you in the

midst of your happiness ; but I would look on, and chide you and cheer you as you go.

“Ye both have been tempted, ye have had trials ; yea, this maiden loved—knew not she might—believed heaven opposed—so did I. She endeavoured to bow to his will, and in bowing, had nearly fallen to the earth ; he lifted her up, and she shall praise him. And you, young man, who are fair as the sons of the first fathers, who came fresher from the hands of the living sculptor, when sin and the world were young, and righteousness preserved the character in the features ; if beauty is comely in man, what is it then in women ? Oh ! may it remain (as I believe it is with both of ye) an index to the purity within ; yet is it a snare to some, and a mask for sin to riot 'neath. You, I say, who if I know aught of human nature—if my ears or my eyes have not failed or deceived me—you have had flattery to withstand. Have you been firm ? The tempter with mailed fingers has knocked at your iron chest—say has not the metal there

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once more, held them at arm's length, and surveyed the countenance of each : pride, love, and admiration rose from her bosom to her eyes, and with a voice that faltered between contending feelings—Nelly bade them depart.

“I have seen him,” she whispered, as she retired within her humble roof, “I have seen him, and am satisfied.”

The lovers pursued their way in silence. With Nelly's words a melancholy overspread their features ; it was wholesome, and gave birth to decoy thoughtfulness.

With one consent they directed their steps to the church-yard ; and there together kneeling beside a simple grave, begged heaven to bless their union ; and having paid their homage to the king of kings, rose refreshed from bending over that peaceful urn, where reposed the ashes of a saint !

The old crone, Margery Toms, had the happiness of dressing up the village church with myrtle for the wedding ; Mary and Edgar were

there, Lady Willoughby and Sir Leonard his new found daughter.

Dora's beautiful face was calm, although death of her little one had been very religion supported the widow through this and her father was near to console. When looked upon the bride, and kissed her friend silently vowed that if another Edith were her fortune and love should be settled on dear child.

With one short year a mighty change over the hamlet of Rochelle. The original and Tumbler' grew another story, and exp wings that sheltered a comely range of st and offices. A splendidly emblazoned shield the Elphinstone arms swung from its elev nevertheless old Roundman's respect for the that had brought him custom and cust caused him to hang it from the back door.

Maggy, who had become a reformed ch and "steady girl," as the Roundman pronounced with great ceremony was given away by th

to Joe his kinsman ; and with the promise of the house and business, took up their places—Joe as head waiter, and consequential, confidential servitor—Maggy as first landlady “after the master.”

There were other places vacant, or temporarily filled, such as stable-boy, chamber-maid, &c. &c. which it was expected the rising family would ultimately possess, and the profits be concentrated upon the immediate owners.

Malvern hall was the chief residence of the happy pair ; for Edith and her father would not be separated, and he loved Malvern, and she loved him.

The old servants' places became sinecures ; Power, with a military air, announced visitors to the drawing-room, whilst an inferior officiated at the door. Another cleaned the plate, affording time for the master-butler's recapitulating his campaigns.

Hipps, the presiding genius of the housekeeper's

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look from her latticed window, and say, "she saw her a'coming who would drive the damp-crow off her chimney, that made it smoke;" and the glow that suffused Edith's cheek, and the smile that burned on her lips, invariably fulfilled her nurse's presage.

Through a deep vale, beautiful in its wildness as secluded and calm, gurgled a gentle stream. Where it took its source, near some tall white stones, rose a mound, upon which, from time to time, were observed to sit one or other of two old men—brethren. The elder kept watch, while the younger begged for their common maintenance. The younger, in his turn, occupied the lonely spot; no promise, however flattering, could induce them to quit the sanctuary; where both hoped to die. The only thought that ever disturbed either was, who should cover up the last. The mound was Judy's grave—the old men were her sons!





## NOTES TO VOL. III.

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### A.

*"To watch over England and steal her for himself.—*The Church of England and the Church of Rome cannot exist together. Either must our holy monarchy be subverted, or the Pope bow down his head. Whatever immunities, whatever privileges Protestants grant the one, let them be assured they are arming their enemies, strengthening them for a fiercer attack; appeasing the wolf's appetite for a while, not satisfying the monster.

### B.

*"Slaves sold to the great dealer."*—The Irishman stands in more dread of his priest than he does of his God, for he believes the first has it in his power to deliver him over, or withhold him from almighty vengeance. Thus

it becomes his bounden duty "to mind the priest," who takes care to shake the keys of heaven and hell in the poor dupe's face, and turn him whithersoever he will.

The foulest murderer dies easy who receives extreme unction; his imagination carries him beyond the grave; the priest's cabalistic words open the gates of paradise to him. Or if the priest by any mischance should not be near at the moment he expires, his friends, if affluent enough, can purchase him out of purgatory in a very short time; want of funds may keep him there for ever.

If we except the killing, or speaking against a priest, the only crime that damns a man in the Irish Roman Catholic Church is, becoming a heretic, a protestant; no mass, no money can save such an one dying in his sin, or insure his safety above ground.

One of the most material precepts of the Romish creed is the denunciation of heretics of all denominations; Protestants are considered the worst class of apostates; and as such are anathematized in every place of Roman Catholic worship.

Such being an universal rule, O'Connell mocks when he cries, "long live the Queen;" the priest jibes when he says, "amen."

### C.

"*The rigid charity that brings it from, &c.*"—A Protestant was in company with an intelligent and zealous

member of the Romish Church ; the scene was a ruinous abbey, once a proud and influential establishment, that had monopolized thousands of the surrounding acres to its individual use, but which were now cultivated by humble labourers, and many beautiful cottages gemmed the vale.

With tearful eyes the Roman Catholic regarded the defaced monuments of his ghostly ancestors, and lamented his religion's fall, pointed to a few upright shafts, and exclaimed : " Behold their beauty still ! what a court was there ! its height how terrible ; to eternity its grandeur led, whilst it awed the mind. The sacred domes of this palace are fallen, and there are some who think 'tis well. Those good men are gone whose delight was to relieve the poor, clothe the naked, and feed the hungry !"

His companion could bear this no longer, and rising, said : " the fallen domes have opened the heaven's pure azure to all. We worship him who dwells not in palaces ; view these broad lands—the eye cannot bound the territory the rich abbey held, and of its immense revenues doled out vegetable soup to the starving poor, and healed with bitter herbs. The smiling gardens, and curling smoke of the peaceful hamlet, tell of a glorious change ; the happy cottagers are fed with flesh of their own killing, and walk the soil buoyant and free from Popish thralldom ! Observe these monastic ruins, and read in legible characters the end of all earthly greatness."

## D.

"*The openly seditious.*"—While the agitator and satellites (not as applied to stars, but to the courtiers the king of regions below) preach the grievances England has inflicted upon Ireland, especially the great or annually taking money from the soil, and making return; they wilfully forget this plaint, wink their eyes while their hands are stretched widely open to catch copper from the beggar's scrapings, the gold from the rich dupe, and something from all, to be appropriated to the forwarding repeal. This nefarious traffic is political and savours of a kingdom below. The already impoverished inhabitant of Ireland, is driven to desperation by the want of food, and starvation on these monopoly occasions, and is ready to swallow any lies, and unwholesome aliment, to satisfy the craving at his stomach. The arch-repealer's cause is favoured here; the madman, O'Connell knows is hard to tame; concessions must be made to him—O'Connell is driven to Ireland to madness that he may gain repeal.

## E.

"*The Idle.*"—The Irish are a lazy and improvident race; this arises from the little that satisfies them; their good humour under self-inflicted poverty is proverbial. Exempted from taxation of almost every kind, inhabiting an exceedingly fruitful country, the cheapness of Irish produce is a matter of astonishment to

visitor, while her people are no less objects of wonder. They would laugh on from generation to generation without encumbering their shoulders with clothes, or overloading their stomachs with viands—the lighter in the heel, and the readier for the dance, did not this idleness make them listeners to designing orators; their imaginative dispositions are enchanted, and carried away by the lying ingenuity of their assailants.

## F.

*“I venerate the Church.”*—The Protestant Established Church of Ireland is in a far more healthy state than the mother Church in England. The pressure from without, the fierce attacks of Papists, have caused her to keep her armour on; and bright and beautiful she appears in that otherwise benighted land.

## G.

*“The quailing horrors of the inquisition.”*—Dragooning is another exquisitely horrible mode authorized by Popish delegates, for the terror of the wavering, and compulsory conversion of heretics. Let every Protestant individual examine for himself, and fear Papal ascendancy, and as strenuously oppose the advance of this diabolical power. And here we may be permitted to point out as a work of peculiar merit, *“Delineation of Roman Catholicism,*

by the Rev. Charles Elliott, D.D." It affords a p study for the present day; it is to be regretted th publication has been undertaken by a dissenting co nity, instead of being sheltered under the wings o National Church. The *hired* reapers sleep. Oh tha may awake ere the harvest be taken from them!

## H.

"*Fairy-rings.*"—Fairy-rings are common on the tains of Wales and Ireland. According to the traditions of both countries, they are occasioned b circling dances of these minute beings, who, on beams borne, visit nightly these haunts to keep th of witching revelry.

## I.

"*Split nostrils.*"—Some Eastern tribes have a m splitting their horses' nostrils to admit the air freely; the furious pace at which they ride rend this precaution necessary to the existence of the an

## K.

"*The Hardy-straw, or Common Shrew.*"—This creature, a species of mole-mouse, is regarded wit by the vulgar, who assert that if it runs over a instep, it lames him. They also believe it cannot l



cross a church's path, there being something so mysteriously poisonous and offensive in its tread, that the sacrilegious attempt is punished by the death of the offender, who lies insensible on the gravel, till ejected by the foot of the school-boy, who takes a mischievous delight in revenging himself upon the powerless thing, that he'd have, living, shunned.

FINIS.











